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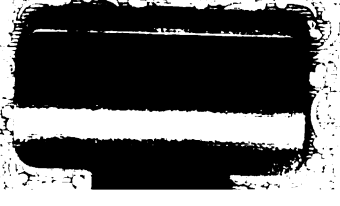

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The Man Napoleon.

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WITH SIXTEEN ILLUSTRATIONS IN COLOUR

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HISTORY I

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The Man Napoleon

CHAPTER I

CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH

I PURPOSE in these pages to tell the story of Napoleon's life—of his sensational rise to power, his brilliant triumphs, and his rapid fall. But it is not with Napoleon the soldier nor with Napoleon the statesman, not with the victor of Austerlitz nor with the dictator of Europe at Tilsit, that we are to be concerned. It is simply with Napoleon the man. His biography is, indeed, part of history. But so far as possible it will here be disengaged from history, which will be treated only as the background and setting of his career. As we follow the quickly changing scenes of a drama which was largely played out on the world's great stage, it is upon the personality of the mighty protagonist himself that we shall try to focus our attention.

When Boswell was in Corsica in 1765 (on which occasion, after his manner, he pestered the great hero Paoli with "a thousand questions with regard to the most intimate and private circumstances of

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his life"), he could not have failed to notice a large, plain, rambling house, almost in the centre of the little town of Ajaccio, and scarcely more than five minutes' walk from the cathedral in one direction and from the citadel in another. This was the Casa Buonaparte; and in it some four years later—on 15 August, 1769—Napoleone Buonaparte first saw the light.

His baptismal name was that of an obscure saint, whose anniversary is marked in the calendar at August 15. But he was not the only Napoleone in the family. An uncle on his father's side bore the name, and it had been given by his parents to their first child, who was born in 1765 and died before the end of that year.

Our Napoleone was the second in sequence of the eight children who survived of the marriage in 1764 of Carlo Buonaparte and Maria Letizia Ramolino. His elder brother, baptised Nabulione, was always known as Giuseppe, or Joseph. Then below him came Lucciano (Lucien), Maria Anna (Elisa), Luigi, Paula Maria (Pauline), Maria Nunziata (Caroline), and Girolamo.

Before the French conquest of Corsica and the introduction of the caste system of the old régime, there had been no thought in the island of social distinctions or the special claims of blood. Life there had indeed been marked by a democratic sim-

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plicity which had won the praise of Rousseau. In the year following Napoleone's birth, however, Louis XV issued a decree admitting into the French noblesse such Corsicans as could make good their title to an aristocratic ancestry. Carlo Buonaparte had no difficulty in fulfilling the rather vague conditions imposed, and henceforth signed himself "de Buonaparte." But notwithstanding the evidence which he was thus able to adduce "from the mouldy rolls of Noah's Ark," his genealogy had really nothing patrician about it. Napoleone's immediate ancestors were either lawyers or small landed proprietors or both in combination, and while they contrived for the most part to live comfortably enough, as Carlo himself did till his fast-increasing family began to press hard upon his resources, they were never rich. At the time of the Empire ingenious attempts were made to trace the Buonaparte family back to the Roman emperors, to the French kings, to the great ruling houses of Italy. If the imperial crown was now worn by one who had risen from the ranks, it must at least be shown that he could prove his "right divine" to it by descent! But for such attempts the Emperor himself had nothing but scorn. In the *Moniteur* for 15 July, 1805, he dismissed the alleged genealogies as "ridiculous and stupid," and roundly declared that his family dated only from the 18th

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Brumaire—the day on which he overthrew the Directory and made himself First Consul. He was not the man to feel humiliated because he was a *parvenu*. Rather did he glory in the fact that he owed his position to his own unaided genius and power of will.

Though not in the way supposed, however, yet in a much more important way, ancestry counted greatly in Napoleone's character and career. This first Emperor of the French, it is essential to remember, had not a drop of French blood in his veins. This master of France came to France as a foreigner, who had even to learn the language of the country whose destinies he was presently to control, and who never learned to speak or write it with absolute correctness. Corsican by birth and of French citizenship only by the accident of a year—for the island did not become French till 1768—he was, as his genuine genealogies show, ultimately Italian on both his father's and his mother's sides. It is to emphasise this fact that I have thus far written his name in the true Italian form—Napoleone Buonaparte—though, the point made, I shall henceforth use the spelling which he himself by and by adopted and which has since been universal. In him, as physiologists and psychologists have alike perceived, the characteristics of the fundamentally Italian nature are everywhere in evi-

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dence; his features were Italian; his manners, gestures, and mode of speech were Italian; he was Italian in his fierce explosions of rage; Italian in his declamatory eloquence; Italian in his histrionic power. Nor is this all. Under the brilliant analysis of the most searching of his critics, his personality and genius stand revealed as an extraordinary example of atavism. To explain him at all, as Taine has shown, we must regard him as a survival from the Italian renaissance. Others before Taine had perceived the striking resemblance between this Corsican adventurer and the Italian soldiers of fortune and petty tyrants of the 14th and 15th centuries: Mme. de Staël had perceived it; Stendal had perceived it. But Taine points out that such resemblance was not, as they had supposed, merely fortuitous. It is to be accounted for by heredity. Among his own forefathers were to be reckoned men of the class in question, and their predominant qualities reappear in him. He had their peculiar type of intellect. He had their indomitable power of will. He had their adventurous spirit and their towering ambition. He had their intense and arrogant egotism. Like them he made himself a law unto himself; treated the ordinary moral obligations of humanity as, for him, non-existent; accepted no conditions as binding save those which he himself chose to make. For him, as for them,

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the world was an oyster and his sword the instrument with which it was to be opened. "His character cannot be defined by the words which we are accustomed to employ," wrote Mme. de Staël, thinking of the standards which modern men apply to their contemporaries. "I am not a man like others," he once declared, with his brutal frankness, "and the laws of morality and decorum cannot be made for me." Three hundred years of civilisation and police have, as Taine says, ground this supreme egotism out of the mass of men. It survived in this strange "throw-back"—this belated representative of the age of the Malatestas and the Borgias.

Inquiry into the extent and direction of the influence exerted upon a child by his home surroundings may often prove futile and even misleading. But it is easy to see to which of his parents Napoleon was the more indebted. His father was a tall, handsome man, of imposing presence and engaging manners; extremely ambitious; clever; well-educated; a doctor of laws of Pisa; able even to speak French fluently—which was very rare among the Corsicans of the time. But he was extravagant, careless, and rather frivolous, and in the words of his famous son, "too fond of pleasure to occupy himself with us children." Their care thus devolved almost entirely upon their mother. This

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indeed was an accepted arrangement in the household. "Let them be," she was accustomed to say to her husband when at any time he might chance to interfere, "this is not your business; it is for me to look after them." And look after them she certainly did, with an extraordinary solicitude and a combination, no less extraordinary, of tenderness and firmness in all her dealings with them. It is evident that she was, mentally and morally, a remarkable woman. More masculine than feminine in nature, as Napoleon said, she was conspicuous for her strength of character, her energy, her love of money and power, her courage (she had been in camp and battle with her husband), and her capacity for practical affairs. Devoted as she was to her children, she allowed no maternal weakness to turn the edge of discipline, and did not spare punishment when punishment was required. Many years afterwards Napoleon recalled a particular occasion when he and his sister Pauline had come under the rod, "and I have never forgotten it," he added, with a significant reference to the thoroughness of the application. But despite her occasional severity her children adored her. "As a mother she was without equal," the Emperor asserted, and to her training he ascribed in chief the development of his own character. Certainly he was his mother's son.

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No less was he the product of his island home. He sprang from a proud, warlike, vindictive race. Lawlessness, the appeal to force, the extreme individualism which resulted from a turbulent social state, in which abstract justice was unrecognised and every man's hand might in a moment be turned against his fellows, were familiar to him from childhood. Political conditions, too, deeply coloured his mind during his early years. "The history of Corsica," he wrote in 1789, in his *Lettres sur la Corse,* "is nothing but the history of a perpetual struggle between a small people who wish to live in freedom and their neighbours who wish to oppress them." The final stage of the long conflict had been reached, as we have seen, only just before his birth. "I was born when my country was dying," he wrote to Paoli. On May 9, 1769, that great patriot, after a stubborn resistance of more than a year, had taken the field for the last time against the French invaders, and overpowered in a decisive battle, had been forced to flee to England. Many Corsicans accompanied him into exile. Had Carlo Buonaparte done so, then Napoleon might have been born in England—in the country which beyond all others he hated and admired. But though the Buonapartes had been active in the war of defence, and though he himself had been Paoli's close friend and aide-de-camp,

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Carlo chose the easier part, and elected to remain at home, where he took the oath of fealty to Louis XV before the French commander, the Comte de Vaux, where he presently became a magistrate and a person of some importance in the new order of things, and whence, early in Louis XVI's reign, he was twice sent—in 1776 and 1778—as a representative of the Corsican nobility to the court of France. But this change of front on his father's part made no difference to the boy Napoleon. French by force, he was obstinately Corsican at heart. He worshipped Paoli. He loathed the alien conquerors and tyrants. His attitude towards them was one of fierce antagonism. This antagonism he presently carried with him to France, where, even as the French king's pupil in a French *école militaire,* he remained the disaffected son of (as he persisted in believing) a down-trodden people. He was already a young man and a French officer before he suddenly shifted his position, and as we shall later see, in the true spirit of the soldier of fortune, abandoned his patriotism to ally himself with the winning side.

Though delicate as a baby, he was hardy enough as a child, and early showed a love of fighting and an ability to hold his own. When he was five his mother, in the hope of taming him down a little and teaching him manners, sent him to a school

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for little girls. But her well-meant experiment had scarcely the desired effect, for his marked fondness for a certain Giacominetta kindled jealousy in the souls of other Ajaccio boys, who discharged their feelings in caustic remarks upon his personal appearance; and there were battles in the streets in which, according to his own account, he rushed blindly in amongst his tormentors, armed with sticks, stones, or whatever other weapon chanced to be at hand. Till nine, his home was in Ajaccio, though he went at intervals with his parents to their country estates among the hills at Bastilica and Bocognano, not far away. Then came the first great event in his life. Carlo Buonaparte's resources were now being severely tried by the continual growth of his family. It was necessary that provision should be made for the education of his two elder sons. The decision reached was that Joseph should enter the church and Napoleon the navy. To this end they were taken by their father to France on the occasion of his second visit in 1778, and placed in the College of Autun. This was Joseph's destination. But Napoleon remained there only three months in order to learn sufficient French to enable him to take up his studies in the military school at Brienne, to which he was transferred in April, 1779.

This school was one of the twelve institutions

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which Louis XV had established nominally for the training of military cadets, though as a matter of fact they were conducted by the religious orders (in the case of Brienne, by the Minorites), and included among their pupils many boys who were not destined for a career of arms. In each of these institutions there were a number of king's bursars, whose board and instruction were paid for out of the royal purse. In order to secure one of these bursaries it was necessary to prove limited means and a noble lineage and to provide a letter of recommendation from some person of eminence. Carlo Buonaparte gave the required certificates, the letter of recommendation being furnished by M. de Marbeuf, the French governor of Corsica, and thus he was relieved of all immediate anxiety in regard to the education of his second son.

At Brienne the boys wore a uniform consisting of a blue coat and a red waistcoat and trousers; but otherwise there was nothing military about the establishment. The teaching was entirely in the hands of the fathers, and naturally, therefore, religious instruction predominated. The general curriculum was not bad for the time, but the teaching itself was rather poor. Latin and French literature and composition were the principal subjects of study, though attention was also given to history, geography, mathematics, and even Ger-

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man, while the accomplishments were represented by dancing and fencing. The discipline was not severe, but the conditions of life were narrow and oppressive. No holidays were allowed, and the pupils were never permitted to visit their homes or to receive presents from outside.

One can picture the little ten-year-old boy, fresh from his home in Ajaccio, amid such surroundings; one can imagine his feelings when he found himself shut up in what for him was a prison house, among strangers in a strange land. The monastic atmosphere of the school weighed upon him. In the dull, bleak climate and barren landscape of Champagne he grew homesick for the blue skies and the hills of his native country. He was poor, too, and it galled him that his companions always had plenty of money while his own pockets were empty. The contempt of the French boys—cruelly expressed, as is the way with boys of all times and places—for the little Corsican who came among them as a foreigner from a conquered people, and spoke their language haltingly and with an atrocious accent, stiffened his pride—his pride of family and his pride of race—and intensified his hatred of all things French. Little wonder that he became taciturn, morose, solitary; that his ingrained egotism came out. "Je ferai à tes Français tout le mal que je pourrai," he once exclaimed

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to a fellow-pupil, Bourrienne. This was, indeed, only an explosion of boyish spite of which too much has sometimes been made. But it is at least an indication of what was rankling in his mind.

At first, then, Napoleon was thoroughly unhappy at Brienne. But by little and little during the five and a half years of his stay there he grew more reconciled to his lot and in after life his memories of the institution were by no means disagreeable. He formed friendships among his companions, notably with the just-mentioned Bourrienne, who was in due time to be his confidential secretary, and with Lauriston, his last ambassador to St. Petersburg. He also lived in pleasant relations with most of his teachers, several of whom he remembered to their practical advantage in those later years of struggle and power when, as the way of the world shows us, it would have been so natural for him to forget. Among these were a Father Charles, whom he afterwards visited regularly when business called him anywhere in his neighbourhood; a Father Dupuis, whom he made librarian at Malmaison; a Father Berton, to whom he gave the rectorship of the school of arts at Compiègne; a Father Petrault, who taught him mathematics, and whom he took with him as one of his secretaries on the expedition to Italy. An anecdote connected with another of these teachers,

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Father Dupré, is very much to the point. One day the old Father gained access to the Emperor at St. Cloud, and recalled to his mind how he had once instructed him in the art of handwriting. "And a pretty pupil you made of me!" replied the Emperor. "I congratulate you!" Whereupon he granted him a pension of 1200 francs. Well might Napoleon make fun of his handwriting, which, like his spelling, was almost incredibly bad.

It is worth while to linger over these details, for insignificant as they may seem, they have their place and value in any study of Napoleon's personality. Whatever the defects of his character, and they were many and grave, ingratitude cannot be counted among them. He is justly described as a good hater. But he remembered kindnesses as well as injuries. Those who had helped him in early life were seldom forgotten by him. There was, for example, his old nurse, Camilla Ilari, the wife of a sailor. Her homely figure might easily have passed out of his recollection amid the stress of politics, the tumult of war, the splendours and responsibilities of a throne. But at her own request, he allowed her to be present at his coronation; he gave her vineyards and money; and in his will he directed his executors to assure themselves that she was beyond the reach of anxiety and want.

In dealing with Napoleon's intellectual progress

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during these years at Brienne, biographers after their wont have tended now towards one and now towards the other extreme. There are those who depict him as a precocious genius. There are those who seek to show that he was on the whole unusually dull for his age. The truth seems to be that he was to all appearance neither a prodigy nor a dunce, but a very ordinary lad. Handicapped for a time by his difficulties with the foreign tongue he had to master and by his ignorance of even the rudiments of knowledge (for his education in Corsica had, as he confessed, been "lamentable"), he made no special mark among his fellows in general scholarship. But he was industrious and greatly given to reading, spending many hours in the library while the other boys were engaged in recreation outside. In two subjects, however, he did presently distinguish himself—mathematics and history. Among his favourite authors Plutarch soon came to hold the first place. He contrived for himself a kind of wooden alcove in the school garden, and there in undisturbed solitude he would pore and brood over the stirring stories of the great men of Greece and Rome. These he connected in his mind with his own hero Paoli, his devotion to whom was continually stimulated by his opposition to his French environment. This was a regular theme for jesting among his school-fellows, for the

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Corsican patriot was ever uppermost in his talk.

Though his first feelings of homesickness had passed away, and, boy-like, he was gradually settling to his surroundings, it must have been a keen pleasure to him when his father and mother visited Brienne in 1782 and his father again, this time alone, two years later. The principal object of Carlo's visit to France in 1784 was to place his daughter Maria Anna in Louis XIV's famous school for indigent young ladies at St. Cyr. But Napoleon's own future was also in question. He had now passed the necessary examinations; had been pronounced of good constitution and well-conducted; and had been recommended by the inspector of the royal schools for a place in the Military College in Paris. Thither he accordingly went as royal bursar in October, 1784. A change in his plans was, however, made. Much to his regret at the moment, for his childhood in Corsica had given him a passion for the sea, he was obliged to abandon all thought of a naval career and to enter himself for the army instead. He chose the artillery as his special field.

The meeting of father and son in the June of that year was destined to be their last. Carlo Buonaparte was already suffering severely from the disease which was ultimately to prove fatal to Napoleon himself—cancer of the stomach. He

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was advised by Marie Antoinette's physician, the celebrated Dr. de la Sonde, whom he consulted while in Paris, to try the waters of Orezza, in Corsica. But growing worse instead of better, he set out for France early in 1785 with the intention of placing himself once more under De la Sonde's care. He got no further than Montpellier, however, and there he died on 24 February, having nearly completed his thirty-ninth year. His death was a great blow to his wife and family, whom he left in very straitened circumstances. As we have seen, he was not a strong man, and his direct influence upon his children must have been very slight. But he had somehow fired them with his own ambition and made them feel their potential greatness as members of a family which he himself had always regarded as exceptional. Evidently Napoleon recognised this. During the ceremony of his coronation as Emperor, he turned to his elder brother, who stood near him, and said, "Joseph, if our father could see us now!"

Napoleon's manner of arrival in Paris gave no hint of future glory. He did not enter it for the first time as one who was soon to be its master. He entered it as the typical raw provincial. "He had," wrote one of his compatriots, who met him as he got out of the coach, "the air of one who has just come to town [*d'un nouveau débarqué*]; he

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stared vacantly about him, gazing on all sides; he had the very cut of those whom pickpockets rob as a matter of course."

His provincial appearance, his want of polish, his utter ignorance of the ways of society, were serious obstacles to him, to begin with, in an institution which was fundamentally aristocratic in character, and which aimed to give to its pupils the tone and deportment of men of the world. Still more was he embarrassed by his poverty. The management of the college was marked by absurd prodigality; the cadets were surrounded with luxuries and fed on sumptuous food; and they were rather encouraged than checked in personal extravagance. Haunted by a constant sense of the ever-increasing financial troubles at home, he stubbornly refused to be drawn by his new companions into their costly pleasures. He could not pay his way, and he would not get into debt. Once he was offered a loan of money by a friend outside who sympathised with him in his difficult position. But flushing up he replied, "My mother already has too many responsibilities, and I am not going to increase them by my own expenses, especially when they are forced upon me by the stupid folly of my comrades." His situation undoubtedly embittered his spirit. "All these cares," he afterwards said, "spoilt my early years; they influenced my humour,

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and made me grave beyond my years." He was, moreover, as obstinate in his insular patriotism and as uncompromisingly hostile to France and the French as he had been at Brienne. "A Corsican by race and nature"—so he was described by one of his professors. At times his feelings broke out into open rebellion. On one occasion his confessor ventured to remonstrate with him on the subject, and reminded him of the duty he owed to his king. "I did not come here," he retorted, "to talk about Corsica; it is not a priest's business to catechise me about it!" and he flung himself out of the confessional in a huff. His fellow-students, like his teachers, were perfectly well aware of his devotion to Paoli and to the lost cause for which the latter had stood. A caricature, made by one of them, survives, in which he is represented stalking forward with a look of fixed determination on his face while one of the professors is vainly attempting to hold him back by his wig; and beneath are the words, "Bonaparte vole au secours de Paoli pour le tirer des mains de ses ennemis."

Yet on the whole Napoleon got on pleasantly enough with his teachers, several of whom were in after years the recipients of various marks of his esteem. The single exception seems to have been the German professor, Baur, who for some reason took a thorough dislike to him and called him a

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blockhead; a judgment for which the amiable Teuton, with the perverseness born of antipathy, actually found support in the lad's marked success in mathematics: "I have always thought that it was only fools who could do mathematics!" He lived, too, on excellent terms with most of his companions, with one of whom, Alexandre des Mazis, he became very intimate. But he made enemies among them as well as friends. Among these the most noteworthy was a youth named Phélippeaux, whose aristocratic temper and ardent loyalty were an everlasting source of irritation to one of Napoleon's democratic bias and Corsican sympathies. The two were in perpetual conflict out of doors and even in the classroom, where, it is recorded, a would-be peace-maker who attempted to stop their quarrels by sitting between them, was rewarded, as is too often the fate of peace-makers, with the kicks of both. It is curious that this boyish antagonism was to be renewed in later years; for Phélippeaux was one of Napoleon's most serious obstacles at an important moment in his career, since as an *émigré* officer he did much to secure the success of the English against him when he laid siege to Acre in 1799.

The curriculum of the college in general followed the lines of that of the school at Brienne, though more time was given to the gentlemanly ac-

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complishments of fencing and dancing, while riding also was taught and there was some elementary military drill. In most of the subjects specially prescribed for the artillery students, and particularly in mathematics, Napoleon did very well, considering that his term at the college lasted only a year. He went up for his final examinations in September, 1785, and passed 42nd in the list of the 58 successful candidates. There is something a little piquant in the fact that his irreconcilable enemy, Phélippeaux, secured the place just above him. He was then given his commission as second lieutenant, and left with Des Mazis to join the artillery regiment of De la Fère, at Valence. He had, however, a practical training of three months to undergo in the ranks before he could take his position as an officer. He received his epaulettes on 18 January, 1786.

Meanwhile, with a vanity natural to his sixteen years, he had hastened to display his new uniform to his friends the Permons, a family from Ajaccio then living in Paris. Unfortunately, the appearance he presented was calculated to arouse amusement rather than admiration, for "he wore boots of such enormous dimensions that his slender legs disappeared completely in them." The result was that the two little Permon girls, Cécile and Laure, burst into laughter, and nicknamed him "Puss in

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Boots" on the spot. Small, ungainly, ill-at-ease, he was indeed a very unheroic figure, and his friends may well be forgiven if for the moment they failed to detect, beneath the grotesque exterior, any signs of latent power. Only his eyes arrested attention—those wonderful eyes which already seemed "to read the innermost thoughts of those with whom he talked."

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CHAPTER II

EARLY STRUGGLES

AT Valence Napoleon lodged with an old man named Bou and his middle-aged unmarried daughter, who kept a *café* and billiard saloon in the centre of the town. That he was well liked by both of them is shown by the regret they expressed when the time came for him to leave. "We shall never see each other again," the old man said, "and you will forget us;" to which Napoleon replied, with his hand on his heart, "You and Mademoiselle are lodged here, and memories placed here do not change garrison." This might easily have passed for empty gallantry. But he was as good as his word, for though the *café* was noisy and otherwise not altogether desirable, he returned to it as a matter of course on his subsequent visits to Valence.

His routine of life was simple, for his early breakfast consisted of a couple of rolls from the pastry-cook's over the way and a glass of water, and he took his other meals, in company with his brother-lieutenants, at a cheap pension in the Hôtel des Trois-Pigeons. But his sense of new-found freedom and the instinctive desire of a lad of six-

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teen to be a man before his time, prompted him to take advantage of his position as an officer and to see something of the world. He thus became a fairly familiar figure in the *salons* of the small provincial town, and even flirted a little with some of the young ladies, especially with a pretty Corsican girl, Mlle. Mion-Desplaces, with whom he danced a good deal, and with a Mlle. Caroline des Columbier, with whom, as he remembered at St. Helena, he once ate cherries, to the sentimental satisfaction of both of them. This Caroline, then Mme. Bressieux, was afterwards appointed by him lady-in-waiting to "Madame Mère," as during the Empire his mother came to be called.

It was characteristic of the growing self-consciousness of youth that he now became aware that his manners were rough and that he was sadly wanting in the social graces. To remedy these defects he took lessons in dancing and deportment. But the whole of his attention was by no means absorbed by such interests as these. He contrived to squeeze money enough out of his meagre pay to buy a few books and to subscribe to a library. It is particularly noteworthy that he read everything he could find about his own island, and made a beginning with a *History of Corsica*. Proof is thus given of the continued ardour of his insular patriotism.

Two visits to Corsica, and the renewal of old as-

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sociations after an absence of nearly eight years, naturally deepened his love for his native land. These visits, made on furlough, extended, with a break of three months in Paris at the end of 1787, from September, 1786, to June, 1788—a period of nearly eighteen months in all. Then he rejoined his regiment, now stationed at Auxonne on the Saône, some twenty miles south-east of Dijon. But the gaiety of manner which had marked him at Valence had now passed away. He had brought back with him painful recollections of the increasing poverty and distress of his family at home. Auxonne had little to offer in the way of social distractions. The malarious condition of the town at the same time affected his health. He thus fell into low spirits; became morose and unsocial; lived much alone in his lodgings, and devoted himself to his books. He read a great deal during this period: among many other things, Rollin's *Histoire Ancienne,* Raynal's *Histoire des Deux Indes,* De Tott's *Mémoires sur les Turcs et les Tartares,* Marigny's *Histoire des Arabes,* Mably's *Observations sur l'Histoire de France,* Barrow's *History of England* (in translation), Buffon's *Histoire Naturelle,* and Lacroix's *Géographie Moderne.* Such books are indicative of the line of his interests and the bias of his mind. It was his habit to read pen in hand, and to make notes of things that struck

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him by the way. His note-books have been preserved, but there is nothing very illuminating or suggestive in their contents. They show us, however, that he was an impatient reader; that he generally grew tired of a book and threw it aside long before he reached the end; and that while he had a keen eye for statistics and political facts, he was quite as much concerned with the details—especially if they happened to be rather gruesome—of any sensational story that he might chance to come across.

His way of life at Auxonne is epitomised in a letter to his mother of 8 June, 1789:—"I have no other resource here except work. I dress myself once a week; I sleep very little since my illness; this is incredible. I go to bed at ten o'clock, and get up at four in the morning; I take only one meal a day, at three. This is very good for the health." The last sentence is obviously added to relieve his mother's anxiety. But despite his assurance, his health continued to suffer, and he became feverish and anæmic. The doctor of the regiment grew uneasy about his condition, and he had no difficulty in obtaining, in September of the same year, another leave of absence. Of course he went home.

Though the Revolution had as yet hardly invaded Corsica, and the artificial fabric of the Old Régime, already shaken to its foundations in France, still re-

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mained intact, the whole island was now in a state of political unrest. The patriotic party saw that their best chance of freedom lay in an alliance with the revolutionary party in France, and the movement towards this end had just begun to assume serious proportions when Napoleon reached Ajaccio. He at once threw himself into it, and became a power among his fellow-citizens; it was he, tradition says, who induced them to haul down the white flag of monarchy which was floating over the castle, and to hoist the tricolour in its place. There were tumults in Ajaccio, and even more desperate riotings in Bastia, the capital, where fighting went on in the streets, and where the French governor was compelled to adopt the revolutionary cockade and to sanction the formation of a National Guard. Napoleon was prominent in these and other disturbances, and not unnaturally his conduct gave great offence to the authorities. He would, wrote the commander of the citadel to the Minister of War in Paris, "be much better with his regiment, for he ferments incessantly *(il fermente sans cesse)*." Yet when his leave expired, it was extended on the score of his health, which was still far from satisfactory. He was rusticating at the baths of Orezza when Paoli, recalled by the change in the political situation which had taken place since the beginning of his exile twenty-one years be-

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fore, once more landed in Corsica. Napoleon met him; but between hero and hero-worshipper a little rift had already appeared which was presently to widen into a breach.

Napoleon was back with his regiment in Auxonne in February, 1791, after an absence of seventeen months. But he was not now alone. He had brought with him his brother Luigi, or Louis, a boy of between 12 and 13, whose care he had undertaken in order to relieve to this extent the financial strain at home. There were thus two instead of one to lodge, feed, and clothe on his slender lieutenant's pay of (in present currency) a trifle over 92 francs a month. It is not surprising that he found it difficult to make ends meet. To say that he was poor is not enough. He had to face hardship and privation, and he met them with grim courage and in the mood in which a man defies fate to do its worst. His shabby little room was bare of furniture, save for a curtainless bed, a table, two chairs, his portmanteau, and his papers and books. His brother slept on a mattress in a tiny chamber adjoining his own. He himself prepared their frugal meals and brushed his own clothes, in order, as he afterwards said, that they might keep clean the longer. But his pride arose against his misery, and he turned a steady countenance to the world outside. Many years later, when an official of his

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government complained to him of his financial straits, "I know all about that, monsieur," he replied; "when I had the honour of being a second lieutenant, I breakfasted on dry bread, but I locked the door on my poverty." But though pride sustained him, his temper suffered in the struggle, and his moodiness and asperity increased.

Such time as he could now spare from his military duties he gave to the education of Louis, to study, and to writing. His devotion to his brother —"Monsieur Louis" as he jocularly called him— and his earnest solicitude about his welfare, come out strongly and pleasantly in a letter home, in which he writes with delight about the boy's progress. "Louis is industrious by inclination as well as vanity. He has acquired a little French tone, correct, light. He goes into society, bows with grace, asks the usual questions with the seriousness and dignity of a man of thirty. All the women hereabouts are in love with him." His own reading was mainly upon the old lines, though an increase of interest in political treatises may be noted. Ambitious still of literary fame, he took up again his *History of Corsica* with the intention of making a work in two volumes out of it. But neither Paoli, whom he asked to help him with materials, nor two publishers, to whom he wrote concerning his scheme, gave him the slightest encour-

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agement. If therefore, as seems probable, he had expected to derive some pecuniary benefit from his literary labours, he was doomed to disappointment.

After a few months at Auxonne, Napoleon was transferred with a detachment of his regiment to Valence, being at the same time promoted to the rank of a first lieutenant. Here he continued to live a life of penury, and to devote himself to Louis and to his own work. He no longer went into the society which he had formerly frequented. But on the other hand he became conspicuous in political circles for his strong sympathy with the popular cause and the advanced character of his ideas. He joined the local Société des Amis de la Constitution, which was affiliated with the Jacobin Club in Paris; was appointed secretary of it; and made his mark by speeches charged to over-flowing with revolutionary fervour. A serious literary undertaking also engaged his attention. The Academy of Lyons had set as the subject of an essay-competition the question: "What truths and sentiments is it most important to instil into men for their happiness?" Napoleon resolved to compete, and in due course his essay was written and sent in. His *Discours de Lyons* is a long, rambling, wordy treatise, which goes round about the subject rather than into it, trails off into innumerable digressions, and in the end leaves the reader in consider-

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able doubt as to the author's meaning. As a contribution to moral or political philosophy it is valueless, but it has some interest on the personal side. In places there are unmistakable touches of autobiography in it; and when, describing a man's feelings on returning to his native land, Napoleon writes: "You hasten through the scenes of your childish joys, the witnesses of the emotions which attended on your first experiences of human nature and the first awakening of sorrow in your heart. In spirit you live those days over again, and again taste their happiness. The love of your fatherland is revived in your heart." The powerful influence of Rousseau over the young lieutenant's mind is everywhere in evidence, though politically it is mainly shown by reaction, for Napoleon repudiates the great Genevan's doctrine of the primitive happiness of man, and his glorification of the savage state. Yet in a direct way, too, the spirit of Rousseau comes out from time to time in his work, as in his insistence on the thesis that life in conformity with "nature" is the only happy life; in his praise of Sparta; and in the landscape pictures of sentimental love of natural beauty which are found in many of his pages. Here and there are passages which strike us as strange when they are read in the light of the author's after career. He discourses at length, for example, on the evils

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of ambition, which he describes as a hideous phantom, with pale face, wild eyes, and sardonic smile, and which he places among the destructive agencies of the world. The whole treatise, as one of the judges said, is a mere "dream"—a fabric built up out of abstractions and without coherence or definite aim. This is curious because it shows that, swayed by the doctrinaire tendencies of the eighteenth century, Napoleon at this time belonged to the class of thinkers he afterwards so cordially detested—the "idealogues." It should be added that the essay did not gain the prize—indeed no one of the sixteen essays submitted was deemed worthy of that honour. The judges pronounced it "the work perhaps of a man of sentiment, but too badly arranged, too disconnected, too rambling, and too badly expressed to hold the attention."

Meanwhile Napoleon had obtained another leave of absence, and again went to Corsica, where he remained from September, 1791, to May, 1792. The whole island was now seething in unrest. The breaking up of the Old Régime had given the leading families a chance to regain the prestige of which the French conquest had robbed them; but their struggle for power had led to innumerable feuds among them; and the fierce strife of rival factions, intrigues, plots, and counter-plots, were the result. The Bonapartes were well to the front in all this

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turmoil, especially Joseph who at the time of Napoleon's arrival was standing as a candidate for the new Legislative Assembly. Again, as on his former visit, Napoleon plunged into the thick of the fray, and in the months which followed this young man of twenty-two gave to his compatriots a foretaste of the qualities before which a little later all France, all Europe, were to stand amazed. Ambitious, bold, masterful, quick in thought and resolute in action, he showed already his characteristic power of turning the weaknesses of others to his own advantage, and his equally characteristic unscrupulousness regarding the means to be used for the attainment of his ends. He did not hesitate even to have recourse to Jacobin methods of violence; as when he abducted a delegate whom he suspected of opposing his candidature for the position of lieutenant-colonel of the Corsican volunteers, and later employed his regiment for an attack upon the municipality of Ajaccio and an attempt to seize the citadel. His entire policy, dictated as it was by personal considerations only, ran counter to that of Paoli, now practically the ruler of the island. Paoli moreover disapproved of his turbulence, and spoke of him as an "inexperienced boy." All this brought about an increase of strain in the relations. The two met at Monticello, but nothing satisfactory came of the interview; and

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when, shortly after, Napoleon went back to the continent, he left his old hero-worship behind him, with much else belonging to the past.

His presence in Paris was very necessary, for his leave had expired and he had been marked down in the list of officers absent without legitimate cause from the general review of 1 January, 1792. Such disregard of regulations, to say nothing of the reputation he had earned for himself as a firebrand while away, would certainly have been fatal to his career had circumstances been other than they were. But the authorities could not now afford to be punctilious. The times were critical; the war office was in a state of confusion; the rapid exodus of officers made it necessary that all should be retained at any cost who were willing to support the Revolution. Hence discipline was relaxed in Napoleon's favour, and though no secret was made of the fact that his conduct in the riotings at Ajaccio had been most reprehensible, he was finally reinstated with the rank of captain. This was in July, 1792.

He had reached Paris at the end of May, and the weeks which elapsed before such reinstatement was secured, mark the lowest ebb in his fortunes. His condition was now indeed desperate. He had to pawn his watch; he was often compelled to dine for six sous at a cheap eating house; sometimes he could not find money to provide for a meal. For-

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tunately he ran across Bourrienne, who had exchanged the army for diplomacy, and their old friendship was renewed on the spot. This for the moment was the one rift in the clouds which had gathered dark and heavy about him. "I was not very happy," writes Bourrienne, "for adversity weighed upon him; and he was frequently quite without resources. We spent our time like two young fellows of three and twenty, who have nothing to do, and very little money—he had even less than I. Every day we brought forth some new project, we tried to find some promising speculation. Once he wished me to join him in renting some houses then building in the Rue Montholon, in order to sublet them immediately." As they neither of them had any capital, or any prospect of capital, and as the proprietor of the said houses, as Bourrienne naïvely adds, made "exaggerated demands" for them, the wonderful scheme for fortune-making naturally fell to the ground. But it amused the two impecunious friends to discuss such visionary projects. Sometimes they dined together at a decent restaurant in the Rue de Valois. This was a welcome change from the cheap eating house. But on these occasions it generally fell to Bourrienne's lot to pay the bill.

While they were thus beating the streets and trying to make bricks without straw, the great

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drama of the Revolution was unfolding around them, and the way was being prepared for the entrance of one of them as a leading actor upon the scene. During his four months in the capital Napoleon was an eye-witness of some of the events by which history was then fast being made. He saw the procession of Sansculottes from the suburbs on their march to the Tuileries on 20 June, and heard their hoarse cries of "Tremblez, tyrans!" He saw the king at one of the windows of the palace, surrounded by rioters, with the red cap of Revolution on his head, while the mob surged and roared in the gardens beneath. He and Bourrienne watched the spectacle from a terrace near the river, and it filled him with disgust. *"Che coglione!"* he exclaimed, "why did they let these blackguards get in there? One ought to sweep four or five hundred of them off with a cannon, and the rest would soon run away." In these words we have the accent of the real Napoleon. All his despotic instincts rose suddenly in revolt against this caricature of democracy, and with his repugnance was mingled a feeling of profound contempt both for the pitiful weakness of the authorities and for the ragged, dirty, frantic crowd which had thus been allowed to carry everything before it. He saw the later attack on the Tuileries on 10 August, when the palace was forced and the Swiss Guards cut to pieces.

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At the sound of the tocsin, he told Las Cases at St. Helena, "I ran to the Carrousel, to Fauvelet, Bourrienne's brother, who kept a furniture shop there. From his house I could at my ease observe all the events of that day. Before reaching the Carrousel, I had met in the Rue des Petits-Champs, a party of hideous men, with a head on the top of a pike. Seeing me fairly well dressed and with the look of a gentleman, they came towards me to make me cry 'Vive la Nation!' which I did without difficulty, as may be imagined." The palace captured, the king in the hands of the Assembly, he ventured into the Tuileries garden. "Never again," he declared, "on any of my battle fields, did I get such an impression as that given me by the masses of the corpses of the Swiss; perhaps it was the narrow space that exaggerated the numbers, or the effect may have been due to its being my first experience of the kind." He remembered all the details of that day: the indecent treatment of the dead bodies by well-dressed women; the passionate scenes in all the neighbouring *cafés;* the hostile and menacing looks often directed upon himself.

Corsica had taught him much. Paris taught him more. Abstractions gave way to realities in his mind. His youthful dreams of democracy and liberty vanished in the white light of actual fact. At the same time his sagacity told him that it would

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be altogether to his advantage to ally himself with the popular cause; and without compunction he resolved to sacrifice principle to gain. The pure egotism which was the foundation of his character now asserted itself as the controlling factor of his life. With a prescience remarkable for his years, for he was barely seventeen, his brother Lucien realised this quite clearly: "I see, and not for the first time," he wrote to Joseph, "that in the case of a revolution, Napoleon would endeavour to ride on the billows, and I think that for his personal interest he would be capable of becoming a turn-coat." Events soon proved the complete correctness of Lucien's judgment.

Napoleon's sister, Maria Anna, generally known as Elisa, was at this time a pupil at St. Cyr. The suppression of the royal school by a decree of 16 August threw her upon his hands. Anxiety for his mother encompassed by dangers at home, prompted another visit to Corsica, and he obtained permission to take Elisa with him. Together they left Paris just after the September massacres, and travelled by way of Lyons to Marseilles. There, during their detention by bad weather, they had an unpleasant experience of the kind which showed the frenzied condition of the popular mind. Elisa happened to be wearing a large hat with feathers. This, for no very apparent reason, was taken as a

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sign of royalist sympathies. Cries were raised of "Down with the aristocrats!" Napoleon was equal to the occasion. "No more aristocrats than you are!" he shouted back; and snatching the hat from the girl's head, he threw it into the crowd, amid a tumult of applause.

Brother and sister reached Ajaccio in the middle of October. This was Napoleon's fifth visit to the island; and it was the first time for thirteen years that the whole Napoleon family had been gathered under one roof. His immediate business was to comfort and encourage his mother, who was greatly distressed about the position of the family, and in particular about the future of her daughters. He told her that he meant to go to India to make his fortune, and, he added, "I will come back in a few years, a rich nabob, with handsome dowries for my three sisters." This may have been jestingly said. But it certainly seems that at the time Napoleon was thinking seriously of India as a possible road to wealth and power.

Affairs in Corsica had now reached a critical stage. Paoli was governor; but the course of events in France, and especially the excesses of the Jacobins, had alienated him from the Convention, and the independence of the island once more became his dream. But he was widely suspected of looking towards England—the country which had

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so long given him asylum—for help in its realisation, and revolutionary sentiment thus turned against him. He was denounced as a traitor by the eighteen-year-old Lucien Bonaparte in the Jacobin Club of Toulon, in a speech which created an immense sensation, and was ordered to be printed. A mandate for his arrest was issued from Paris. Napoleon on the spot meanwhile kept a close watch on the complicated situation. His line of action was for the moment by no means clear. He did not openly break with Paoli, who still occupied a strong position, and whose chances of success he was not yet able to gauge. But circumstances soon forced him to show his hand, and he went over to the French, or anti-Paolist, side. The overthrow of Paoli thus became essential both to his own plans and to the safety of his family; and he accordingly set out to compass the ruin of the man who had been his hero and his friend. He made several attempts to seize the citadel of Ajaccio, and these failing, determined to join his brother Joseph at Ajaccio to plan concerted action. But he was intercepted by enemies on the way, and barely escaping their clutches, hastened back to Ajaccio, where, not daring to show himself at home, he remained for some days in hiding at the house of a cousin in the suburbs of the town. Then he contrived to reach Bastia, where he induced the commissioners to under-

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take an expedition for the capture of Ajaccio. But the scheme miscarried, and Napoleon arrived in his native town to discover that the Bonaparte house had been sacked by the Paolists, and that his mother and the children who were with her had been forced to fly. He joined them immediately at Torre Capitello at the entrance of the bay, and conveyed them for safety to Calvi, where the friendly family of the Giubegas gave them shelter and hospitality. Thence he despatched a report to Paris on the condition of the Department of Corsica, exposed Paoli's anti-French policy, and outlined a plan for the reconquest of the island. But conditions made it impossible for the Bonapartes to remain any longer in their old home. They had now broken entirely with the patriotic party and had gone over to its enemies. He himself had to rejoin his regiment, and as they were completely destitute, he resolved to take them with him to France. On 11 June they accordingly embarked, and two days later arrived at Toulon, where Lucien was ready to receive them.

This was Napoleon's real farewell to the island he had loved so passionately, and whose freedom had been the subject of his youthful dreams. When in 1799, on his way back from Egypt to France, he passed a few days in Ajaccio, he was deeply moved by the sight of his childhood's home,

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and by a meeting with his old nurse, who welcomed him with cries of "Caro figlio! caro figlio!" to which he replied with "Madre! madre!" But his mind was then filled with other matters, and in the struggle for supreme power upon which he was about to enter, Corsica was soon forgotten.

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Napoleon in Society

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CHAPTER III

EARLY SUCCESSES

THE Bonaparte family settled in France because in France now lay their only hope for the future. Napoleon himself had burned his bridges behind him, and was henceforth to be identified with a people he had formerly hated as the conquerors and oppressors of his native land.

Life in their new home was at the outset hard enough. It was indeed a life of dire poverty and struggle. As political refugees, known to be adherents of the revolutionary cause, they received a pittance from the Convention, and this, as Lucien afterwards said, just kept them from starvation. Napoleon at the same time exhibited his customary loyalty to his family. Small as was his pay as an artillery officer, he devoted the greater part of it to their needs. Then presently brighter days dawned for them. Joseph was appointed a commissioner with the army, and Lucien a superintendent of stores at St. Maximin. The financial tension of the household was thus to some extent relieved.

One friend had stood them in good stead during this season of distress. This was the wealthy M. Clary of Marseilles, variously described as a silk-

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merchant and a manufacturer of soap. He came generously to Mme. Bonaparte's aid. Nor was this all. One of his daughters, Julia, presently became the wife of Joseph; a capital match, for she brought him a handsome dowry out of her father's fortune. Later on there were also tender passages between Napoleon and his other daughter, Désirée, and for a time it seemed likely that a second marriage would further unite the two families. But the flirtation ended where it began, and Désirée afterwards married Bernadotte, the future king of Sweden. Lucien, who in accordance with revolutionary taste, now called himself Brutus, meanwhile had taken as his wife Catherine Boyer, the daughter of an inn-keeper at St. Maximin. She was absolutely illiterate, and could not even write her name. But she was a young woman of excellent character and made him a good helpmate.

On his return to France, Napoleon joined the 4th regiment of artillery at Nice. It was a time of great commotion throughout the country. Counter-revolutionary influences were active. There was a royalist rising in La Vendée. The departments of the south, which had sympathised with the Girondins, were in general revolt against the Constitution of 1793. The army of Carteaux, of which Napoleon's regiment was a part, was busy in stamping out the blaze, and Napoleon himself

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was sent on various missions to Lyons, Valence, Montélemar, Orange, Avignon, and Beaucaire. It was in the last named place that he appears to have been inspired with the idea of proving his new patriotism by the pen as well as by the sword; a course not unnatural considering his situation at that moment of danger when the activity of the Committee of Public Safety made every man feel that his head was insecure on his shoulders, and when his own Corsican origin might easily bring him under suspicion. He accordingly wrote his remarkable pamphlet, in which vigour of opinion is matched by vigour of style, *Le Souper de Beaucaire*. It is said, and it seems extremely likely, that the first suggestion of this came to him from an actual discussion with other guests over the supper-table of the inn where he was staying. At any rate the pamphlet takes the form of a conversation, the interlocutors in which are a soldier, evidently Napoleon himself, and his table companions, two merchants of Marseilles, one from Nîmes, and a manufacturer from Montpellier. The main theme of their talk, which turns on the political situation of the hour, is the revolt of the south; and the soldier proceeds to convince these men from different southern cities of the folly and futility of their action. This he does, not by abstractions or the use of general principles—for the writer has now dis-

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carded these along with other unrealities of his youth—but by a direct appeal to hard facts and commonsense. The revolt, however much it may be cloaked in fine-sounding phrases, has impeded the operation of the armies of the Republic and so played into the hands of the Republic's enemies; and in the long run the insurgents themselves stand to suffer with the rest of France in consequence. As a revolt it is moreover hopeless; for it can end in nothing but the ruin of its supporters, whose relative weakness, inexperience, inadequate resources, and want of union among themselves, make their destruction by the forces of the Republic inevitable. Let them, therefore, be well-advised enough to realise before it is too late that their safety and prosperity depend upon their acceptance of Convention and Constitution. The real point of the argument throughout is that at such a juncture every one should rally to the central authority and that, if necessary, political principles must be waived, since wisdom lies in adherence to the party actually in power.

Incidentally, it is not amiss to remark, Paoli—the once revered and beloved Paoli—figures in this pamphlet, as a designing traitor, whose purpose it is to deceive the people, crush the true friends of liberty, and draw his compatriots into ambitious and criminal projects.

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"There was a time," Napoleon afterwards remarked to Thibaudeau, "when every man who had a soul to save was bound to be a Jacobin." No one reading this pamphlet could be left in any doubt as to its author's determination to attest his wholehearted devotion to the Mountain. To place that beyond reach of suspicion or cavil had of course been his chief purpose in writing; and he succeeded. The *Souper de Beaucaire* was printed at the public expense, and it caused the Convention to look upon the young Corsican refugee with a more favourable eye. In particular, it brought him into friendly relations with Augustin, the younger brother of Maximilien Robespierre: a dangerous privilege as we shall see directly.

Shortly after its publication, Napoleon had his first real chance of showing his mettle. Toulon, one of the cities in rebellion against the Convention, had opened its gates to the English under Admiral Hood, and their Spanish allies, and the flag of England now floated over the citadel. Carteaux's army was despatched at once to bring it to submission, with Dommartin, who had sat with Napoleon when he took his final military examination in 1785, in charge of a portion of the artillery. But Dommartin was severely wounded in an early skirmish and had to retire, and Napoleon, then on his way back to Nice, was appointed to his place.

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This was in September, 1793. On the 19 December, after many fruitless assaults, Toulon was evacuated by the allies and occupied by the besiegers. Concerning the precise part which Napoleon himself played in the triumph of the Republican troops there have been considerable differences of opinion, and it is fortunately not necessary for us to enter into the controversy here. The oft-repeated statement that he alone was responsible for the plan of attack which finally ensured the fall of the city must apparently be dismissed as part of the great Napoleonic legend—of that immense tissue of fiction and half-truths which has grown up about the name and doings of the mighty conqueror and continues to hold powerful sway over the popular imagination. But there is no doubt that he made the astonishing force of his personality felt both in council and in action, and that he gave signal proof of his genius for strategy, his sound judgment, his coolness, daring, and courage. His services were described by the chief commander of the artillery, Du Teil, as "conspicuous;" "to say that he showed the greatest insight and knowledge and extraordinary bravery," runs Du Teil's report to the Minister of War, "is to give a very inadequate account of the merits of this exceptionally good officer." Like others who had been prominent in the siege, he had his reward, for he was promoted to the rank of brigadier-general.

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Rightly or wrongly, Napoleon's biographers have generally treated this episode as the real starting-point of his career. In so doing they seem to have forced it out of its true perspective. But they have the authority—not a very trustworthy authority indeed—of Napoleon himself. When he dictated his Memoirs at St. Helena, it was with Toulon that he began.

His promotion meant a large increase of pay, and a corresponding improvement in the fortunes of the Bonaparte family, who were now placed beyond the reach of want. As Inspector of Coasts he had his headquarters at Nice, while his mother was comfortably settled at Antibes, a dozen miles away. Plans for an expedition against Corsica, which on 18 June had declared its allegiance to the English crown, and a secret mission to Genoa kept him busy for a time. Then a tremendous blow fell upon him —a blow which was almost fatal. On the 9 Thermidor of the second year of the Republic—27 July, 1794—the dictatorship of Robespierre, and with it the Reign of Terror, came to an end. This spelt disaster for all who were even suspected of having been supporters or friends of the Robespierre party. Among these was Napoleon, whose relations with the younger Robespierre were a matter of common knowledge. He saw his danger and attempted to avert it by hastily disavowing the "Tyrants," as the

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leaders of the Terror were now called. But the attempt failed; he was denounced as a traitor to the Committee of Public Safety; and on 10 August was arrested and imprisoned in Fort Carré, near Antibes. An absurd charge was preferred against him of having gone to Genoa as a tool of the Tyrants to sell the plans of the French army to the enemy. To this he made a dignified reply; his papers, which had been impounded, failed of course to substantiate the accusation in any particular; and after thirteen days' incarceration, with the shadow of the guillotine hanging over him, he was released. The chief mover in his arrest had been his former associate, the Corsican Salicetti. From this he learned one more lesson in the stern school of life —the lesson, namely, that one should not trust too implicitly one's friends.

He was again at liberty, and his way was apparently clear. But his evil star was still in the ascendant. On his return from another unsuccessful expedition to Corsica, he received orders to take command of the artillery in the Army of the West, which was just then about to enter on a fresh campaign in La Vendée. This annoyed him, for it meant that he would have to exchange the big chances of war in Italy for the petty field of civil strife, in which no laurels were likely to be won. But even worse was in store, for when he reported

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himself in Paris, the new minister of war, Aubry, struck his name off the list of artillery generals and put him in charge of a brigade of infantry instead. "You are too young," said Aubry, "and must give way to older men." "One grows old quickly on the battle field," was Napoleon's retort to a minister who had never been on a battle field in his life. But his protest was unavailing, for Aubry would not be moved. Upon this he pleaded ill-health as a reason for not accepting a service the offer of which he regarded as a slight. His situation was again critical, but he faced it with a courage which had more than a dash of recklessness in it. In this city of Paris, which was fast recovering its customary way of life, and which, he complains, "is always the same —all for pleasure, women, theatres, balls, promenades, the studios of artists," he felt himself hopelessly at odds with fortune. "I have got into the state of mind," he writes to Joseph, "which I have experienced on the eve of a battle—a state of mind in which one feels that if death is in our midst about to bring everything to an end with a single blow, it is folly to worry oneself on that account. Everything combines to make me defiant of death and fate; and should this condition of feeling last, my friend, I shall presently come to such a point that I shall not step out of the way when I see a carriage rolling towards me. My reasoning faculty stands

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amazed at this, but the spectacle the country presents, and one's familiarity with the game of dice which is being played by fortune, have brought me to this pass." We must do him the justice to add that his letters to Joseph prove his continued solicitude on behalf of his mother and the rest of his family. He had indeed good cause for anxiety. Lucien, too, had had an experience of imprisonment, and notwithstanding the advantages accruing from Joseph's excellent marriage, the general outlook of the Bonapartes was again disquieting.

Napoleon lingered in Paris in the hope that with a change in the ministry of war a post might yet be found for him in the artillery, for his determination was unshaken not to serve in the line. He had now formed a close relationship with Barras, whose part in the events of the 9 Thermidor had brought him into great power; "for," as he afterwards confessed at St. Helena, "Robespierre was dead; Barras was playing a rôle of importance; and I had to attach myself to somebody or something." It was through Barras' influence in all probability that he was entrusted with the responsible task of preparing a plan of campaign for the army of Kellermann and Schérer in Italy. Such a commission naturally gave him great encouragement. Yet his circumstances at the moment were grim enough. He had to sell his books; to seek the help of his brother

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Joseph; to borrow money from Talma. "I am at my last *sou*," we find him writing to the great actor; "can you put a few crowns at my service? I shall not refuse them, and will repay you out of the first kingdom I conquer with my sword." We must think of him, as depicted by a contemporary witness, walking the city streets, through which the tides of gay life were beginning to flow again, with "an awkward and uncertain step," his "shabby hat pulled down over his eyes," his hair "badly combed and badly powdered," his hands "long, thin, and dirty, and without gloves, because," he said, "these were a useless luxury," his boots "ill-made and ill-polished." His very appearance and bearing betokened his dejection.

His chief companion in these darks days was Andoche Junot, his junior by three years, whom he had met at Toulon, and who had suffered imprisonment with him at Antibes. Junot was at this time much in love with Pauline Bonaparte, and one day, when the two friends were strolling together in the shady walks of the Jardin des Plantes, he told her brother that he wanted to marry her. But Napoleon prudently refused to countenance their immediate union. "You have nothing; she has nothing; and what is this total? Nothing! You can't marry her at present, therefore. Let us wait."

On 15 September Napoleon's name was formally

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erased from the list of generals on active service on the ground that he had refused to "betake himself to the post to which he had been appointed." This decisive action is commonly referred to the new war minister, Letourneau, who was ill-disposed towards him, and on the face of it, it looks as if it were meant to put an end to his career. This is the view generally adopted. Yet as Dr. Lenz has pointed out, a different interpretation of it is possible. Napoleon in the meantime, growing tired of waiting on the remote chance that his wishes might be met, had formed other plans. The Sublime Porte had asked for French officers to help in the reorganisation of the Turkish artillery, and Napoleon, whose imagination had long felt the spell of the East, had offered his services. Now he could not undertake the proposed mission to Constantinople unless and until he had been relieved for the time being of his duties in the French army, and the removal of his name from the list of generals may therefore have been intended only to give him the required freedom, his refusal to enter the line being used as a pretext. In any event, on the very day on which his name disappeared from the list another decree was issued granting him leave of absence for the journey to Turkey, and placing him at the head of a staff of officers to be selected by himself. He had now only to wait till final orders

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could be given and all necessary arrangements completed. But the mission to the Porte which, had it been carried out, would have condemned him to a long period of useless activity in a distant country, was never to be undertaken. Once more it seemed as if fate interfered to put opportunity in his way. Within a week another sudden change in the revolutionary drama brought with it an equally sudden change in his fortunes.

He had been well aware of the growing unrest of the capital, and he can hardly therefore have been taken by surprise when popular hostility to the Convention broke out into revolt after the promulgation of the new constitution of Year III. After tumultuous meetings, the sections armed in haste, that of Le Péletier, the best quarter of the city, taking the lead; wild excitement prevailed; all Paris was soon in a state of open insurrection. Poor General Menou, who was ordered to quell the disturbances, only succeeded by his inefficiency in making matters worse. Then the Convention in a panic declared itself *en permanence,* and Barras, whose part in the downfall of Robespierre was well remembered, was put in supreme command. But Barras was not the man for the moment, and he knew it. He had not the qualities of a soldier; he hesitated to make the appeal to arms; he dreaded bloodshed. It was necessary that he should find

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some one nominally to act under him but in reality to take the practical responsibilities off his shoulders. He therefore consulted his colleagues; the names of several generals were mentioned; and the choice fell on General Bonaparte. The precise reason for his selection is uncertain. It was probably due in part to the fact that he had made his mark in the artillery, and artillery was now wanted; and in part to the further fact that he was a Corsican, and therefore would not be likely to share the scruples felt by many French officers about shooting down their fellow-countrymen. He was moreover already one of Barras' professional advisers, and very possibly pushed his claims forward. But personal influences may have counted too in the choice, for it is said that it was Fréron, who was just then in love with Pauline Bonaparte, who, anxious to do her brother a good turn, actually brought Napoleon and Barras together in the interview in which the offer was made and accepted. However this may be, the matter was quickly arranged. Summoned to Barras' presence Napoleon was asked if he would take the second command of the army of the Convention. "I give you three minutes to decide," said Barras to him; and in those three minutes his destiny was decided. Only the day before he had remarked to Junot, "If only these sectionaries would put me at their head, I

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would make short work of the Convention!" But once again the spirit of the soldier of fortune came to the surface; he saw his chance and seized it; and it was of the sectionaries themselves that he proceeded to make short work. He did what the Convention wanted, and did it with characteristic determination and thoroughness. On the morning of the 13 Vendémiaire (5 October, 1795) the Parisians gathered, some 40,000 strong, to attack the Convention, which was holding its sittings in the Tuileries. Napoleon had his artillery already placed to receive them, and when, after some hesitation, they began to advance, he opened fire upon them. That "whiff of grapeshot" did its work; the sections broke and dispersed; and the same evening Barras was able to report the complete triumph of the government. Thus the Republic was saved for the moment by the man who only a little later was himself to overthrow it for his own purposes, and who now redeemed to the full the promise—or threat—which he had made to Barras at the outset, that, his sword once drawn, he would not sheathe it till order was completely restored.

It is here in Paris, on 13 Vendémiaire, rather than at Toulon, that Napoleon really emerges from obscurity into the full blaze of fame. "Fortune is on my side," he wrote to Joseph, reporting that day's doings; and there is no doubt that the fickle

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goddess was now preparing to do her best to make amends for her long neglect. He was at once reinstated in the artillery, and was appointed, in quick succession, second in command of the Army of the Interior, General of Division, and Commander in Chief of the Army of the Interior. All this involved a vast change in his outward circumstances. He no longer had to walk the streets in shabby clothes and untidy boots. He dressed in the fine uniform of his rank, and rode about in his own carriage. Characteristically, he at once bethought him of his family. He sent money to his mother and sisters; used his influence in obtaining good appointments for his brothers, Joseph, Louis, and Lucien, and placed Jérôme, who was still only eleven, in a college in Paris.

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Napoleon and his Suite leaving for Mass

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CHAPTER IV

NAPOLEON AND JOSEPHINE—THE CAMPAIGN IN ITALY

NAPOLEON'S achievement in saving the Convention at a moment of gravest peril gave him prestige as well as prosperity, and as "Captain Vendémiaire" he found himself a prominent figure in the extravagant, dissipated, and extremely mixed society of the first months of the new Directory.

It was a fresh world to the young Corsican officer, and his strenuous nature made it hard for him to accommodate himself to its light tone and ostentatious frivolity. But ambitious now to become a Frenchman among the French, and fully aware how much every man's success must depend on backstairs influences, he did his best to conquer his awkwardness, assume a Parisian bearing, and in particular, ingratiate himself with the ladies, whose enormous power in the practical affairs of the moment he had already perceived.

Among the *salons* which he frequented was that of the Director Barras, the reigning queen of which was the beautiful and profligate Mme. Cabarus, who about this time became Mme. Tallien. Here

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he met the woman whose destinies were to be so closely linked with his own, Mme. de Beauharnais.

Marie Rose Joseph Tascher de la Pagerie was born in the island of Martinique on 23 June, 1763, and was thus six years Napoleon's senior. She came to France in 1779 to marry Alexandre de Beauharnais, himself a native of Martinique, and whose family was aristocratic, like her own. At that time, it will be remembered, Napoleon was still a student at Brienne. The union did not prove altogether a peaceful one. The young wife's conduct aroused her husband's jealousy; he applied for a divorce; and after considerable delay the Parliament of Paris, deciding that there were faults on both sides, granted a formal separation, the care of the daughter, Hortense, being entrusted to the mother, and that of the son, Eugène, to the father. Josephine then spent three years in Martinique and for the time being it seemed that the breach was final. But on her return in 1791 a reconciliation was effected, and Josephine redeemed whatever faults she may have committed by her courage and steady adherence to her husband in the dark days which presently came to them both. In the meanwhile Beauharnais had become immersed in politics. On the outbreak of the Revolution he eagerly embraced the new principles, and was one of the first of the nobles to renounce the privileges of

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his caste and to throw in his lot with the Third Estate. He then became secretary of the National Assembly, and was acting as president of that body when news came of the flight of Louis XVI. His astonishing coolness on that occasion made a great impression on those present; for at a moment when panic seemed imminent, he quietly rose in his place, and said: "Gentlemen, the king has just fled. Let us pass to the order of the day:"—words which were deemed worthy of the best traditions of the Roman Senate in its palmiest days. But even these were forgotten at the time of the Terror, when his enemies revived a report that his inactivity as commander-in-chief of the army of the Rhine in 1793 had caused the loss of Mainz. He was thereupon brought before the revolutionary tribunal on an accusation of treachery, found guilty after a farcical trial, condemned to death, and guillotined the same day. Josephine had also been thrown into prison, and there is no doubt that she would have shared her husband's fate but that she became so ill that the physician in charge certified that she was not fit to be moved. This respite saved her; for the fall of Robespierre threw open her prison doors. After that, and before the first year of her widowhood was over, she became, along with her friend Mme. Cabarus, one of the acknowledged leaders of Parisian society. She had found a protector in

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Barras. Whether, as evil tongues alleged (including the particularly evil tongue of Barras himself) she had found something more than a protector in him, is a question to which no final answer can be given. Loose living was fashionable in the society of the Directory, and Josephine was certainly no puritan; but in this case we may, if we will, give her the benefit of the doubt.

On her release from prison her situation was in the last degree depressing, for her property had been confiscated, her resources were practically exhausted, while her two children, the future viceroy of Italy and queen of Holland, were apprenticed, the one to a carpenter, the other to a milliner. It was then that Barras came to her rescue, and through his good services part of her property was restored. She was thus able to buy from Talma a house in the Rue Chantereine. When Napoleon first met her, she was one of the most attractive of the many attractive women in the gay capital. She was not exactly beautiful, like, for example, her friend Mme. Tallien, and at thirty-two was already a little faded. But she was, as Napoleon long afterwards said of her, "grace personified;" indeed, in the oft-quoted phrase of her first biographer, she might have taken as her device La Fontaine's well-known line—"Et la grace plus belle encor que la beauté." Her figure was per-

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fectly proportioned; her pallid complexion and large, dreamy, dark blue eyes were admirably set off by her abundant chestnut hair; while the mobility of her features, the seductive elegance of her movements, and the rather exotic charm of her manners contributed greatly to the fascination which she exercised over all, whether high or low, who came into contact with her. She dressed well, too, in the peculiar style of a time when the revival of Greek taste in costume—"such Greek as painter David could teach," as Carlyle caustically remarks—led to many astonishing results. Altogether we need not be surprised that Josephine de Beauharnais held her own among many dangerous rivals, and awoke "des sentiments amoureux" in the hearts of several men a good deal younger than herself.

Among these was Napoleon, who fell in love with her on the spot. "This," says Auguste Marmont (afterwards Duke of Ragusa), who was present at their first meeting, "was apparently his first passion, and he felt it with all the energy of his character;" a statement which reminds us that in thinking of him as a lover we must not forget his own remark that the blood rushed through his veins like the waters of the Rhone. His first passion, perhaps; but certainly not his first affair of the heart; for to say nothing of sundry minor flirtations, he had

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been in love with Désirée Clary, and had offered his hand to the mature Mme. Permon. But his feeling for Josephine was undoubtedly far deeper and more serious that he had ever experienced before, and he entered upon his courtship with characteristic vigour and resolution. It was not a long courtship, for it lasted all told for only some five months, and the course of it was subject to many interruptions, for he was busy at the time with all sorts of things, personal and professional, and especially with the reorganisation of the National Guard and the creation of a special guard for the Directory. Thus in the early days of their acquaintance and before their formal engagement, we find Josephine complaining of his neglect:—"You no longer come to see a friend who loves you; you have entirely forsaken her; you are wrong, for she is tenderly attached to you." To which Napoleon replies: "I cannot understand the reason of your letter. I beg you to believe that no one desires your friendship more than I do. If my engagements had permitted I should have come myself with this answer." It was quite in his way to carry his love-making to a successful issue without allowing his more prosaic duties to suffer in consequence.

Though the allegation is doubtless correct that Napoleon perceived the practical advantage of a

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union with a woman of Josephine's social standing and influence, the real ardour of his passion for her must not therefore be overlooked. On her side, her feelings were singularly mixed. She realised to the full the young general's genius and astonishing force of personality; she was attracted by him; yet she was more than a little afraid of him. She was troubled, too, by the disparity of age, and by the thought of what might happen when the first fervour of love had cooled. The following passages from a confidential letter to a friend are extremely interesting for the light they throw both upon her character and upon that of Napoleon himself:—"You have seen General Bonaparte at my house. Well, it is he who wishes to serve as father to the orphans of Alexandre de Beauharnais, as husband to his widow. Do you love him? you will ask me. But . . . no. You have therefore an aversion from him? No. But I find myself in a state of luke-warmness which displeases me, and which devotees find worse than anything else in the matter of religion. Love being a kind of worship I ought to feel in a very different state of mind from what I am in; and this is why I want your advice, which would determine the perpetual irresolutions of my feeble character. To come to a decision has always been a fatigue for my creole nonchalance, which finds it much less trouble to accept the will of

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others. I admire the courage of the General, the extent of his knowledge about everything of which he speaks; the vivacity of his mind, which makes him understand the thoughts of others almost before they are expressed; but I admit that I am alarmed at the empire he seems inclined to exercise over all who surround him. There is something singular in his scrutinising look which cannot be explained, but which imposes even upon our Directors. You can imagine how he must intimidate a woman! What ought to please me, too,—the strength of his passion, of which he speaks with an energy which leaves no doubt of its sincerity—is precisely what hinders me from according a consent I am often on the point of giving. Being no longer in my first youth can I hope to preserve for any length of time this violent tenderness, which, in the General, resembles a fit of madness? If after our marriage he should cease to love me, would he not reproach me for what he had done? Would he not regret some more brilliant marriage which he might have contracted? What should I be able to reply? What should I do? I should shed tears. A fine resource, you exclaim! I know that it is of no use, but I have never found any other when my poor heart, so easily hurt, has been wounded. Write to me soon, and do not fear to scold me if you think me in the wrong."

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Again, in the same letter Josephine remarks upon the surprising self-confidence which she had already observed as a dominant trait of her lover's character. He had talked to her, it seems, of the Directory's need of him for their defence: "my sword is at my side" he had told her, "and with it I shall go far." Upon which she continues:—"What do you think of this certainty of success? Is it not proof of a confidence derived from an excess of self-love? A general of brigade protect the chiefs of the Government! I know not how, but sometimes this ridiculous assurance imposes upon me to the extent of making me believe anything possible that this singular man may take into his head; and with his imagination, who can tell what he will undertake?"

A woman's keen insight into the character of her lover is clearly evidenced in these remarkable words.

With Napoleon's marriage is closely associated a decisive incident in his career, though the whole subject has been so much obscured by gossip and scandal that it is impossible to speak with certainty as to the precise bearing of one event upon the other. In the letter from which I have quoted is this noteworthy sentence: "Barras assures me that if I marry the General he will obtain for him the chief command of the army in Italy;" while Barras

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himself affirms that such command was in fact given by him to Napoleon, to put it bluntly, as a wedding gift to Josephine. On the basis of these assertions the marriage has been turned into a kind of bargain, to which Napoleon himself was a party; the arrangement being that he should relieve Barras of Josephine in return for a high military appointment. This sordid view of Napoleon's conduct is, however, discredited for various reasons; among them this, that the appointment in question was not in Barras' power to bestow. It lay with the "Cinq Sires" of the Directory, one of whom, Lepéaux, afterwards declared that the whole story was absurd, while another, Carnot, placed it upon record that the nomination came immediately not from Barras but from himself. On the other hand, it is not denied that Josephine stood well with the Directors. Hence the very timeliness of the marriage at a period when wire-pulling was universal, gives it a suspicious look. A grain of truth may therefore lie concealed in Josephine's confidential statement to her friend. Other considerations must however have counted in the appointment. In the first place, as will be remembered, Napoleon had already drawn up a plan of campaign for the army in Italy. This had been rudely rejected at the time by the two generals in command; for Kellermann had called

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it the work of a lunatic, while Schérer had contemptuously suggested that the man who had prepared it should himself be put to the impossible task of carrying it out. Yet that plan may now have been regarded as proof of Napoleon's special fitness for the position upon which he had set his heart. Then, secondly, it is clear that the Directors were getting alarmed at the activity and dictatorial ways of their ambitious and intriguing young supporter. As in Corsica some years before, so now in Paris, he "fermented incessantly," and his importunities kept them in a state of perpetual unrest. He had saved the Convention, it is true, and had so earned their gratitude. But the very powers which he had exhibited on that memorable occasion might easily prove disastrous to the Directors themselves. There was indeed a general feeling among them that it would be well if Napoleon were got out of the way, and his appointment to the command in Italy thus served their purpose from two points of view: it secured them from the peril with which his presence threatened them at home, and (since his extraordinary abilities were now recognised), it gave promise for the success of their arms abroad.

The marriage took place before the mayor of the second ward of the city on the evening of 19 Ventôse, year IV (9 March, 1796). It was a

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singular ceremony in several respects. Up to his eyes in work connected with his new duties, Napoleon kept the wedding party waiting for more than an hour, and appeared, all in a hurry, at ten o'clock. Meanwhile the mayor had fallen asleep in his chair, and the bridegroom's first business was to wake him. The two notorious regicides, Barras and Tallien, were both among the witnesses: a circumstance to which piquancy was given by the relations which were well known to exist between Barras and Tallien's wife, and by the whispered reports which further connected the former's name with that of the bride herself. As for the marriage certificate, it was curiously incorrect in sundry important particulars. Thus, for example, whether by accident or by design, the inequality in years between bride and bridegroom was made to disappear, the age of both being given as twenty-eight. It is said that the *actes de naissance* presented to the mayor were, in the one case that of Napoleon's elder brother Joseph, in the other that of Josephine's youngest sister, Marie.

Like the courtship, the honey-moon was brief and disturbed. It lasted only two days, many hours of which were spent by the husband locked up in his room over his maps and papers: his reply to all appeals from without being that love would have to wait for victory. With a hasty kiss

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through the half-open door, Josephine had therefore for the moment to be satisfied. Then on 11 March, bidding her farewell in her house in the Rue Chantereine in which they had established themselves, he set out for Nice, the headquarters of his army, taking Marseilles by the way, in order to obtain—which he did with some difficulty—his mother's approval of his marriage. It may be noted that it was at this point that he changed the form of his surname. In announcing to the Directory his union with the Citoyenne Beauharnais he signed himself "Buonaparte." In his first despatch from Nice he wrote "Bonaparte." The alteration is significant of his determination to make himself entirely a Frenchman. In particular he did not wish to lead a French army into Italy himself bearing an Italian name.

At the outset of his campaign he had jealousies and dissensions to contend with, for the officers over whom he was now placed were ill-disposed towards one whom they regarded as a young upstart and the creature "of Barras and the women." But his dominating personality bore down all obstacles, and his amazing grasp alike of the largest subjects and of the minutest details impressed even those who were the most prejudiced against him. Then the brilliancy of his achievements during the next eighteen months was such as to convince both

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France and Europe that a military genius of the first order had now come to the front. By his tireless energy, the boldness of his strategy, the rapidity of his movements, and his capacity for inspiring enthusiasm in his men, he carried everything before him. Victory followed victory; the republic at Lombardy was organised; the Pope was forced to come to terms; and the treaty of Campo Formio (17 Oct., 1797) set the seal to the young conqueror's triumphs.

Yet if his marvellous successes justified the Directors' confidence in him, no less did his conduct justify their alarm. Again and again in critical emergencies he acted on his own initiative, without waiting for instructions from Paris, or coolly disregarding them when they came. He set up as a dictator; treated directly with sovereign powers; usurped functions which properly belonged to the central government alone. "Do you think," he asked, "that I conquer Italy in order to benefit those lawyers in Paris?"—a question which shows that, despite his repeated protestations of loyalty to the Republic, it was his own glory after all that was in the forefront of his thought. In fact his colossal egotism was quite as much in evidence as was his genius throughout this Italian campaign. These first achievements on a great field of action, even if they did not surprise him as much as they

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surprised the world, unquestionably gave him a practical revelation of his own enormous abilities, stimulated his ambition, and made him keenly alive to the even greater things which now seemed to be within his reach. Europe stood amazed at what he had actually accomplished. In his own view, as he told Junot, he was only "just beginning." What special plans, if any, regarding the future, were now shaping themselves in his restless brain, we do not know. But it is certain that Italy stiffened his determination to make men and circumstances bend to his iron will and serve his own personal ends. An element of superstition mingled with his nature, and as he himself afterwards declared, the almost miraculous victory at Arcola, when he barely escaped with his life, was taken by him as a token of his supreme destiny.

In one other way Italy revealed his character. At the opening of his campaign he had frankly appealed to the greed of his army, and for the violence and pillage which more than once disgraced the French arms, though he himself "blushed" for them, he was therefore indirectly responsible. He himself plundered right and left, exacting heavy tributes from conquered territories, and despatching to his government jewels, gold and silver plate, statues and pictures from the great centres of art which he overran. By such systematic vandalism

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he greatly increased his popularity at home, for he not only gave glory to France and enriched her capital with the splendours of despoiled cities, but also filled her coffers at a time when the burden of war weighed heavily upon her tax-payers. Military glory is always most appreciated when it is paid for out of the pockets of other people.

For Napoleon himself, however, this Italian campaign had its dark side. The shadow of personal anxiety was across his brilliant path; and that shadow was cast by Josephine. Events soon proved the ill-advised character of a marriage in which love existed on one side only.

It was said by Mme. de Rémusat that when nature made Napoleon she must have forgotten to give him a heart, for "he was too much concerned about his own fame to be hampered by affectionate feelings of any sort." That, in general terms, our supreme egotist was entirely willing to crush out every human consideration which stood between him and his ends, is perfectly true. But even the most selfish men may experience the full power of love without having their selfishness in the least touched thereby; for love is not necessarily the highly purifying passion of our romantic dreams, and in a vast number of cases is indeed only another mode of selfishness. There is therefore nothing paradoxical about the fact that Napoleon's relations

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with Josephine were characterised by a lover's ardour and a lover's jealousy. Even amid all the pressing cares and grave responsibilities of his position, on the eve of critical battles and on the morrow of magnificent victories, he was, Marmont tells us, "continually thinking of his wife." The moment he saw that the way was clear he implored her in letter after letter of vehement eloquence to join him in Italy. "Isn't he funny, this Bonaparte?" ("Est-il drôle, ce Bonaparte?") was her flippant comment upon these epistles. Light-natured, giddy, fond of society and admiration, she was indeed loth to leave the capital with its round of pleasures and its flirtations, and now on one pretext now on another delayed her departure; and this, says Marmont, "tormented him grievously." One day at Tortona, the glass in front of her portrait, which he always carried with him, broke in his hands. He turned pale, and (the superstitious element in his character asserting itself), "Marmont," he said, "my wife is either ill or unfaithful." From the place where this incident occurred, he wrote to her: "My life is a perpetual nightmare. A black presentiment makes breathing difficult. I am no longer alive; I have lost more than life, more than happiness, more than peace; I am almost without hope. I am sending you a courier. He will stay only four hours in Paris, and will then bring

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me your answer. Write to me ten pages; that is the only thing which can console me in the least"; and so on, through many more burning sentences. To this letter, dated 15 June, 1796, Josephine yielded, and though with infinite regret, set out for Milan, where Napoleon was now installed in the Duke of Serbelloni's princely palace.

He received her with "transports of passion," and for the moment was happy in the reunion. But a week later he had to tear himself away in order once more to take the field. At this point his troubles began. Left behind, Josephine soon consoled herself with the gaieties of Milan, which were no bad substitute for those of Paris. But her husband's heart was filled with passion and wrung with anxiety. Here are a few passages from his letters.

"I am very uneasy to know how you are and what you are doing," he writes from Marmirolo, on 18 July. "I have been in Virgil's village on the borders of the lake, in the silvery moonlight, and not an instant without dreaming of Josephine." The next day he reproves her for her silence: "For five days now I am without letters from you. Thirty times to-day I have said this to myself, and you know that is very sad; you cannot however doubt of the tender and unique solicitude you inspire in me." The same chord is struck in a note from Brescia on 10 August: "I have just arrived,

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my adorable friend; my first thought is to write to you. Your health and your image have not been a moment out of my memory during the whole journey. I shall not be at peace till I get letters from you. I am waiting anxiously for them. It is not possible that you can picture my disquietude. . . . If the most profound and tender love can make you happy, you ought to be so—I am overwhelmed with business. Adieu, my sweet Josephine: love me, keep well, and think often, often of me." "Three days without letters from you, yet I have often written to you," is his complaint on the following day, for Josephine was too much occupied with her pleasures and her admirers to trouble to respond to his repeated appeals; and again on the 17th: "No letters from you—this is making me very anxious." The prospect of a speedy meeting cheers him greatly for the moment: "In a few days we shall see each other again," he writes from Montebello on 10 September: "this is the sweetest recompense for all my fatigues and troubles." And on the 12th, referring to the pending engagement with Wurmser: "The moment this affair is settled I shall be in your arms." The meeting so fervently anticipated had however to be postponed, and from this date on his letters show his growing sense of Josephine's apathy and the rise of suspicions regarding her conduct. From Modena on

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17 October, he sends a note of passionate remonstrance: "I had to keep my bed yesterday. Fever and a violent headache—all this prevented me from writing to my adorable friend; but I have received your letters, I have pressed them against my heart and my lips, and the pain of absence, the thousand miles of separation, have disappeared. In this moment I have seen you near me, not capricious and angry, but sweet, tender, with that unction of kindness which is the exclusive portion of my Josephine. It was a dream: judge if it cured me of my fever! Your letters are as cold as fifty years, and resemble fifteen years of marriage. One sees in them the friendship and the sentiments of that winter of life. Fi, Josephine! This is very wicked, very bad, very treacherous of you. What remains for you to make me thoroughly an object of pity? To love me no more? Ah, that is already done. To hate me? Ah, well, I wish it; everything degrades except hatred. But indifference with a pulse of marble, fixed eye, monotonous course!—A thousand, thousand kisses, very tender, like my heart!" Curious, confused words, these, touched, we are inclined to suspect, with fever. Then agitation finds vent in strange outpourings of abuse:—"I do not love you at all," runs a note of 18 November, "on the contrary, I detest you. You are a wretch (*une*

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vilaine), very clumsy, very stupid, very slovenly (*bien cendrillon*). You do not write me at all; you do not love your husband; you know the pleasure your letters give him, and you do not write him six lines thrown off at random. What are you doing all day long, madame? What business is so important that you have not time to write to your devoted lover?" And then, with a sudden change of tone, "In truth I am anxious, my good friend, not to have any news of you. Write me quickly four pages of those kind things which fill my heart with sentiment and pleasure." This is followed on the 28 November with the bitter reproof: "You have not the time to write; I see that easily. Surrounded by pleasures and amusements you would do wrong to make the slightest sacrifice for me. . . . Be happy, do not reproach me, do not worry yourself about the happiness of a man who lives only in your life and enjoys only your pleasures and your happiness. When I sacrifice to you all my desires, all my thoughts, all the moments of my life, I obey the power which your charms, your character, and all your person have obtained over my unhappy heart. I am at fault if nature has given me no attractions to captivate you; but what I deserve of Josephine is regard and esteem, for I love her furiously and her only . . . I reopen my letter to give you a kiss. Ah, Josephine! Josephine!"

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It is hard to realise that such language as this—and the foregoing extracts are a few examples only out of the mass—is the language of a man who meanwhile was figuring in the eyes of the world as a mighty conqueror and a domineering dictator of princes and pope. Throughout his victorious progress he was indeed haunted by his dreams of love; and that love was more and more dashed with bitterness as more and more he came to understand Josephine's indifference and its meaning. The climax was reached when on returning to Milan on 27 November he found that, instead of waiting for him, she had gone on a pleasure trip to Genoa. Whether during this period she had been guilty of anything worse than coquetry and frivolity is an open question. But coquettish and frivolous she at least was, and even if we put the best possible construction upon her conduct we must still admit that it was such as to justify his jealousy. On her return to Milan she found no difficulty in reasserting her sway over him, and he forgave her freely. But though his attachment to her continued to the end, the passion of his devotion had now passed away.

He entered Paris on 5 December, and was received with wild enthusiasm by the people; and Josephine, slight as was her affection for him, was now able to enjoy, amid the rejoicings and revelries of the capital, the glory which he had won for her.

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A Reception at the Tuileries

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CHAPTER V

THE EXPEDITION TO EGYPT

ON 10 December, Napoleon was formally welcomed by the Directory in the great court of the Luxembourg. It was a splendid scene, and popular feeling ran high. As the conqueror of Italy, spare of frame and pale of face, advanced to the Altar of the Fatherland, which had been erected for the occasion and was loaded with trophies, the chorus of the Conservatory of Music sang the Hymn to Liberty, and, according to the *Moniteur,* the vast multitude "in a transport of delight" joined in the refrain. He was presented to the Citizen Directors by Citizen Talleyrand, minister for Foreign Affairs, who delivered a long and windy speech full of most fulsome flattery. Then, handing to Barras as President of the Directory, the ratification of the treaty of Campo Formio, Napoleon made a curt and almost contemptuous reply, speaking in a jerky way and in the tones rather of a general accustomed to command than of an orator anxious to ingratiate himself with his audience. But the few who heard and the many who did not were alike satisfied, for they had seen the great hero of the hour; and the

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tumultuous cheering which broke out within the assembly was caught up and re-echoed by the enormous crowds which packed the neighbouring streets.

Had mere fame been his object, Napoleon might now have been content. He was idolised by the Parisians; eulogised by the *Moniteur;* fêted and followed wherever he went; praised in verse and prose as the rival of Alexander and Cæsar, the peer of Socrates, the man who in a couple of years had won ten thousand centuries of glory. The name of the street in which his house was situated was immediately changed from Rue Chantereine to Rue de la Victoire in honour of his presence in it. By unanimous vote he was made a member of the Institute, and thus recognised as belonging to the innermost circle of the intellectuals of France. Outside, everything thus conspired to gratify his vanity. At home his happiness seemed secure. Josephine was now completely in her element; her son, who had been with his step-father in Italy, was now back again; her daughter was at Mme. Campan's school at St. Germain; she herself, admired and courted, was the radiant centre of the brilliant society which gathered in her *salons.* The cup of his desires, it might well seem, was filled to overflowing.

Yet, all this notwithstanding, he was not satis-

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fied. His restless spirit longed for action. He found no real pleasure in the hubbub which was made about him. Such popularity as he now enjoyed meant little to him, and the plaudits of the masses did not for a moment turn his head. These people, he told Bourrienne, "would crowd round me just as eagerly if I were going to the scaffold." At the bottom of his heart he had always despised the mob, and his scorn of them was now stronger than ever. He certainly had no confidence in the stability of their favours. "No one remembers anything in Paris," he said to the same friend. "One fame succeeds another in this great Babylon. If I go three times to the theatre no one looks at me, so I go very seldom." These words are extremely significant. Much is often made of Napoleon's modesty, his avoidance of publicity, the simplicity of taste which he showed when on great occasions he appeared, not in military uniform, but in the civil costume of the Institute. But there was always something a trifle theatrical about his behaviour, and by his own confession, his retired way of life at this period of dazzling fame was largely a matter of calculation. Thus, as he was shrewd enough to see, he could best stimulate the curiosity and appeal to the imagination of the multitude. In Paris he was, in fact, as he clearly recognised, only the hero of the moment, or at most,

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a nine days' wonder, and he craved for something more substantial than such transient notoriety. "I don't want to stay here," he declared to Bourrienne, "I see very well that if I stay, it will be all over with me soon. Everything wears out here, my glory is gone." Moreover, he felt confined and ill-at-ease. He was, as he once asserted, born with the habit of command, and where he could not command he could not be happy. In Italy he had enjoyed the reality if not the name of sovereign power. Now, even though the crowds might shout themselves hoarse, he was after all only a subordinate of the Directory, and the sense of his subordination to men whom he hated and disdained was infinitely galling to him. "This Paris weighs upon me like a coat of lead!" To escape from it into some world of adventure, independence, opportunity for self-assertion and self-aggrandisement, became his chief desire, and once more his imagination felt the spell of the East. "I must go to the East: that's where all great reputations are made." And again: "Europe is a mole-hill; you will find great reputations and great revolutions only in the East."

He understood quite well the Directors' attitude towards him, and returned their suspicions in kind. They indeed had been bound to express, officially and publicly, their gratitude for what he had done.

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But they distrusted and feared him even more than when they had sent him to Italy. Already in fact a struggle for supremacy had begun between him and his nominal masters; yet their strained relations made it all the easier for him to get his way. Judging that the only chance of keeping him quiet was to keep him employed, they gave him command of the so-called Army of England. That at this time he seriously thought of an invasion of England is not to be supposed: there was much popular clamour for it, it is true, but it was not the sort of enterprise that appealed to him. His thoughts ran in a very different channel, and he soon persuaded the Directory to consent to his undertaking an expedition to Egypt. His gigantic scheme, which involved conquest, colonisation, and the establishment of an empire which would ruin the English power in India, was visionary and, as events proved, absurd. But whatever the Directors thought of his plans, they were glad enough to be rid of him at a time when they had good reason to suspect that he was actually plotting against them. For his own part, his ambitions were larger than they seemed. In going to Egypt he looked far beyond Egypt. He meant to win glory and power there; but he meant to use such glory and power to strengthen his position at home. He believed, and he knew that there were many others who be-

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lieved, that the government was unstable and that he himself was the only man capable of coping with the difficulties of the situation. In these facts he saw his opportunity of making himself master of France. But the time was not quite ripe. He had first to give both the Directory and the French people a convincing proof that they could not do without him. This, as he cynically confessed in his *Mémoires*, was at bottom the real motive of the expedition to Egypt. In order to become master of France, it was necessary, he explained, for the Directory to experience reverses during his absence and for his return to restore victory to the flag. According to our low current standards of political morality, patriotism is supposed to excuse all sorts of misdeeds. But in this case there was not even a pretence of patriotism. The conquest of Egypt was for Napoleon only a move in a great game. What it might cost to France did not matter. The fact that it withdrew from the country the flower of its troops at a time of great uncertainty and peril, was simply a point in his favour.

The sinews of war were provided for him by the plunder of Berne by General Brune and of Rome by General Berthier; and everything was in readiness by May, 1798. Napoleon reached Toulon, the port of embarkation, on the 9th of that month, accompanied by Josephine, who now learned for

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the first time that he did not purpose to take her with him. Aware of the activity of the English fleet in the Mediterranean, he was anxious to move without delay, but for ten days he was detained by adverse winds. On the eve of his departure he issued a proclamation in which, though in cruder language than he had used at the opening of the Italian campaign, he once more sought to stimulate the spirit of cupidity in his army, promising that each soldier should bring back with him money enough to buy six acres of land. Such an indecent appeal to greed accorded so ill with the temper of the French people at large that the Directory, realising its impolicy, hastened to pronounce it a forgery, while Napoleon himself published a revised version of it with the objectionable sentences carefully excised.

His fleet numbered nearly 500 vessels of all sorts and sizes, which carried all told—soldiers and sailors together—about 35,000 men. He had taken care to provide himself with a splendid staff of officers, and had also induced some of the leading French scientists—among them, Monge the physicist, Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, the naturalist, and Berthollet the chemist—to accompany him. The departure from Toulon was, we are told, an imposing spectacle, and those who watched and those who went were alike filled with sanguine en-

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thusiasm. Yet Napoleon's over-confidence had led him, as experts well understood, to take fearful risks. The odds against his reaching Egypt without encountering the English fleet were enormous, and as Admiral Brueys, the commander of the naval forces, admitted, ten English men-of-war would have sufficed for the destruction of the whole expedition. With a temerity which in the circumstances appears amazing, he had indeed trusted to fortune, and as it happened fortune favoured him. By a sheer accident he eluded Nelson, who had been lying in wait outside Toulon, and got to Malta, while the English admiral, misled as to his movements, made for Naples. Malta was strong enough to hold out indefinitely in a regular siege, yet it capitulated without making even a show of resistance. By this time Nelson, realising that Egypt must be Napoleon's goal, had again set out in pursuit, but passing the French fleet in the night, he reached Alexandria before it and finding that it was not there, hurried on to the Levant. The very next day the French fleet came up. Fearful of the proximity of the English, Napoleon then disembarked his men in hot haste, and took possession of Alexandria. Thus far events seemed to justify his characteristic boast to his army that destiny was with them. Such an extraordinary run

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of good luck, indeed, naturally served to deepen his faith in his star, which at this time was so strong that he might have said, with Marlowe's Tamburlaine:

"I hold the fates bound fast in iron chains,
And with my hand turn Fortune's wheel about."

He had carried fantastic dreams with him to the East, for in imagination he had seen himself riding on an elephant, with a turban on his head, and holding a new Koran written by himself—the founder not only of a great empire but also of a fresh religion. The position which he chose to adopt, however, was that he had come to Egypt to deliver its people from the tyranny of the Mamelukes, who ruled them in reality as absolute masters, though nominally as vassals of the Sultan of Turkey. The absurdity of this view of his mission was soon apparent. But to begin with he sought to conciliate the population by manifestoes in which he posed as their friend, and expressed boundless admiration for the Mussulman faith, which he stood ready not only to protect against all enemies, but even, it would appear, to adopt on his own account. In his dealings with native officials he kept up the pretence, interlarding his speech with phrases from the Koran, and continually boasting that he had overthrown the Pope and the Cross.

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Such pure charlatanism would have been ridiculous if it had not been contemptible.

After establishing his power in Alexandria he set out for Cairo. The march across the desert in the fierce heat of summer severely tried the temper of his troops, who suffered grievously from hunger, thirst and fatigue. But two battles with the Mamelukes, one under the shadow of the Pyramids, revived their spirits, for their own losses were slight while those of the enemy were enormous. In particular, their appetite for plunder was satisfied, for they were kept busy for several days stripping the bodies of their dead foes—even those which had to be recovered from the river with bayonets turned into fishing-hooks for the purpose. "From this time," said Napoleon, "the soldiers began to be reconciled to Egypt." A fine commentary on military glory and the disinterested humanitarianism of the expedition!

But fast upon the heels of these successes came news of a great disaster. On the night of 1-2 August, Nelson completely annihilated the French fleet at anchor in Aboukir Bay, thus destroying Napoleon's means of retreat and cutting off his communications with Europe. This catastrophe spread consternation through the ranks. But he himself met it without flinching. His belief in his star was not so easily disturbed. "One must keep

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one's head above the waves," he told Marmont, "and they will calm down"; and, isolated as he now was, he proceeded with the conquest of the country and with the work of developing and consolidating its resources. In this he showed his usual sagacity, his largeness of view, his firm grasp of detail, and his remarkable qualities as an administrator.

He was interrupted by the outbreak of a conspiracy in Cairo, which showed how little the people of Egypt thought of his claim to be their deliverer. The barbaric severity with which the rising was quelled proves, as Lanfrey says, that Napoleon had learned more from the Orientals than some sentences out of the Koran. Such severity has been extenuated on the ground that it was required to secure his position. But as the same historian well asks, "what plea can be urged in favour of an enterprise which rendered such conduct necessary?" The blood of two thousand wretched fellahs, slaughtered "as a lesson," was only a small part of the heavy toll which at every stage of his career our great conqueror exacted as the price of his inordinate ambition.

A far graver danger now threatened him, for the Porte resolved to assert its suzerain power and to drive the foreign invaders out of its territory. Napoleon determined to take the initiative, and

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early in 1799 advanced into Syria with 11,000 men, leaving the rest of his army in Egypt. He was victorious at El Arish and Jaffa, but met with a fatal rebuff at Acre. For sixty-one days he maintained the siege, and delivered fourteen assaults upon the city. But all his efforts failed to break down the defence of the heroic garrison under Jezzar Pasha and Sir Sidney Smith. In these hopeless operations he lost heavily, and when plague broke out among his men, and news came that another Turkish army had left Rhodes for Egypt, he saw that he must retreat. This reverse shattered his dream of eastern empire; as he afterwards said, it made him miss his fortune and "changed the destinies of the world."

One very dark stain rests upon the story of this unfortunate Syrian campaign. After the capture of Jaffa Napoleon found that he had some twenty-five hundred prisoners upon his hands. What should he do with them? If he kept them they would be a drain upon his supplies. If he released them, they would reinforce the enemy. Such was his problem; and he solved it by ordering that they should all be butchered, "care being taken," according to the words of his instructions, "that not one should escape." The enormity of this proceeding is brought out by the fact that some of his officers refused outright to have anything to do

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with it. In later years he himself made feeble attempts to justify it, thus showing that he had at length come to realise its infamy.

He covered up the humiliation of Acre by a grandiloquent proclamation to his troops in which he praised them for their marvellous successes and told them that the capture of the city was not really worth while, since it would have entailed the loss of brave men whom he now wanted for more important operations. It was rather late in the day to concern himself about such a subject; but fine words go a long way; and so little was failure allowed to weigh against him that the defeated General actually re-entered Cairo with all the pomp and circumstance of one returning from magnificent victories. A few days later he destroyed the Turkish army which had now reached Egypt from Rhodes, and though there was nothing brilliant about the achievement, it served to some extent to retrieve his fortunes.

For six months he had been without news from the outer world. Negotiations with the English fleet in Aboukir Bay for an exchange of prisoners now brought him into touch once more with European affairs, for Sir Sidney Smith—professedly as an act of courtesy, really, it can scarcely be doubted, with the object of discouraging him—sent him a large batch of English papers, from which he

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learned of the disasters which had lately befallen France. The arms of the Republic had suffered repeated reverses; Italy was lost; the Directory was discredited and tottering to its fall; the whole country was a hot-bed of political discontent. He now saw that his hour had come—that, in his own phrase, "the pear was ripe"; and he resolved to abandon his oriental dreams, and to return to France without delay. Cleverly concealing his design, he made rapid preparations for departure, and with a number of officers whom he had selected to accompany him—among them, Murat, Berthier, Bourrienne, and Eugène de Beauharnais—he secretly embarked, on the night of August 22, at a lonely part of the coast near Alexandria. Eugène has told us in his *Mémoires* that the mystery surrounding their departure, his regret at leaving behind so many brave comrades in arms, the fear of being taken by the English, and the unlikelihood of ever seeing France again, combined to fill his mind with feelings of sadness, and he adds that these feelings were shared by his companions. Napoleon alone was unperturbed. His confidence in fate remained unshaken; he was troubled by no fears of the perils with which the homeward voyage was certain to be beset; even less was he moved by any compunction regarding his course of action. It is true that in the judgment of plain men his

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flight from Egypt would seem nothing short of a base desertion of duty. He had led his men into a blind alley, and common honour demanded that he should stand by them to the end. He knew perfectly well that the strength of his army had been sadly undermined by an arduous and fruitless campaign; that his own withdrawal at so critical a moment would have a demoralising influence upon it; that he was deliberately robbing it of its best officers; that Kléber, whom he was leaving in command, would have to face certain disaster. But such considerations meant nothing to the colossal egotist. He had something more important to think about—his own success; and his own success required his immediate presence in France.

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CHAPTER VI

THE FIRST CONSUL

THE amazing good fortune which had attended Napoleon on his way to the East favoured him on his homeward voyage. Bad weather delayed him, indeed, but with more than one hairbreadth escape he eluded the English cruisers, and on the morning of 9 October, 1799, landed at St. Raphael in the Bay of Fréjus. Like a gambler playing for high stakes, he had once more disregarded the enormous odds against him, and once more he had won.

It was well for him that Egypt is a long way from France, that little was known for certain about the details of the expedition, and that then, as always, the imagination of the multitude, once stirred to hero-worship, was but slightly affected by circumstances which, to an impartial observer, might seem calculated to chill its enthusiasm. There was something vast and mysterious about that campaign in the remote and romantic East which had caught the popular fancy; legends had already grown up about it, which were proof against the test of hard fact; while in his recent despatches the General himself, with consummate

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In the Park at Malmaison during the Consulate

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cleverness, had contrived to minimise his failures and to set his successes in high relief. No one now paused to consider the value of what he had done, or to criticise his action in leaving his army to its fate. The whole country, indifferent to Acre, was willing to welcome him as the Hero of the Pyramids; men of every faction saw in him the strong man who was needed amid the distractions of the hour. His journey from Fréjus through Aix, Avignon, Valence, Lyons, and thence to Paris, was one long triumph; church-bells were rung and bonfires lighted everywhere along his route; and the news of his approach was the signal for universal excitement and rejoicing in the capital. He reached Paris on 24 Vendémiaire (16 October), and at once went to the Rue de la Victoire. Josephine was still a cause for anxiety, and it was with a heavy heart that he re-entered his home. The farewell at Toulon had been tender, and the wife's disappointment at not being allowed to accompany her husband, apparently sincere. But she soon consoled herself with the amusements of the capital, though she, too, had her troubles; for the Bonaparte family, now settled in Paris, were, from Madame downward, openly hostile to her, and her extravagant taste in dress and pleasures kept her constantly short of money. She was, however, popular; people of all classes and parties liked

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her; and those who detested her husband were often led to think more kindly of him on her account. In this way she had been indirectly useful to him. At the same time her conduct was not of the kind to improve her reputation; the Bonapartes took care that it should be made to look as bad as possible; and so Napoleon was haunted in Egypt and Syria, as he had been in Italy, by torturing doubts of her fidelity. He talked freely of these doubts to Junot, to Bourrienne, even—a strange thing to do—to Josephine's own son Eugène. He carried them with him to the Rue de la Victoire. As it happened Josephine, aware of his feelings towards her and desirous of seeing him before he could be reached by any of his family, had set out to meet him on the way, but taking a wrong road, had failed to do so; and she was therefore absent when he arrived. Such was his state of mind, that even this fact, easily explicable as it was, seemed suspicious to him. Two days later she returned to find that he had locked himself in his room. He had determined never again to forgive her; sooner than that, he had passionately declared, he would tear his heart out and throw it into the fire. It was only when the entreaties of Hortense and Eugène had been added to those of their mother that he yielded; and the reconciliation which followed was complete.

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We need not doubt that he acted from affection, and not from policy. Yet policy alone might well have dictated the same line of conduct, for an open rupture with his wife, and all the scandal which would have ensued, would have put a weapon into the hands of his enemies, and might have ruined all his plans. She, too, was quick to see that her interests were now entirely at one with his, and henceforth gave him no reason for dissatisfaction. Indeed, by her tact and social influence she smoothed for him in many subtle ways the path which was to lead him to power.

In the political chaos which then prevailed one thing alone was clear—that the fate of the Directory was sealed. Yet so complex was the situation and so many were the factors involved, that even Napoleon, despite his sagacity and his self-confidence, felt himself at sea. He knew well that he could reckon upon his immense popularity and prestige throughout the country. Yet at a moment when a single false move might be fatal he saw that it was necessary to proceed with the utmost caution. He therefore held aloof from all parties, and, while marking time, craftily contrived to avert suspicion by professing that his health was poor; that he was tired of his strenuous life; that he had ceased to think of power and glory, and cared only for the learned discussions of the In-

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stitute, before which he delivered a long address on the scientific results of the Egyptian expedition. Publicity he studiously avoided; and he kept as much as possible out of the general eye, because, as he afterwards told Mme. de Rémusat, he did not want to have every one dogging his steps. As part of his policy, he habitually wore civilian dress and made a point of frequenting those circles of Parisian society which were conspicuous for their republican sympathies.

Sieyès, the only member of the Directory who really counted, was already meditating a *coup d'état*. He wanted a strong man of action to take the practical lead, and when just then Napoleon arrived upon the scene, his thoughts naturally turned to him. He hesitated to make advances, however, not because Napoleon was not strong enough, but because he was likely to prove too strong. "If we succeed," he told his friends, "Bonaparte will throw us all aside"—and he made a significant gesture—"like that," a prediction which he recalled when the blow had been struck with the results which he had foreseen. It was only pressure of circumstances which finally compelled him to go to Napoleon for help. Now Napoleon hated and distrusted Sieyès at least as cordially as Sieyès hated and distrusted him; but pressure of circumstances also forced his hand. He had in the

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meantime been intriguing with the revived Jacobin Club and had found that nothing could be done in that direction on account of the stubborn opposition of Bernadotte, who was powerful in its councils. He now began to realise that Sieyès would after all prove his most useful tool. The two men were brought together by common friends, and Napoleon consented to take charge of the plot already formed to overthrow the Directory and set up a new government in its place. The outlook was promising. A second Director, Ducos, was in the secret; Sieyès controlled a majority in the Council of Ancients; Lucien Bonaparte dominated the Council of Five Hundred, of which he was president; Fouché guaranteed the neutrality of the police; and as most of the generals then in Paris were among the conspirators, it was confidently assumed that the rank and file of the army would follow.

The feeling was now wide-spread that something was about to happen, and the political atmosphere seemed heavy with an approaching thunder-storm. At this juncture the chief of the Directory, the zealously republican Gohier, presided at a banquet given in the Temple of Victory (formerly the Church of St. Sulpice) to the Hero of the Pyramids. That banquet showed the tense condition of the public mind. No function could

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have been more gloomy. Every one was ill at ease, and the guest of the occasion (perhaps remembering the rumour that Hoche, who had died suddenly in 1797, had been poisoned by those who wanted to get him out of the way) partook of nothing but a crust of bread and a pint of red wine brought to him by his own aide-de-camp. He did not even stay to the end of the dinner.

That same night—it was the 15 Brumaire (6 November)—the conspirators completed their plans. There was a clause in the existing constitution which provided that in case of danger to the Republic the two Chambers (the Ancients and the Five Hundred) could by decree of the former be removed for safety from Paris to St. Cloud, while a general could be appointed expressly to protect the legislature. A Jacobin plot was accordingly manufactured to furnish a ground of action. Then on the morning of 18 Brumaire the Ancients met at the Tuileries, and everything followed the prescribed programme. An orator set up for the purpose dilated on the mythical plot; the decrees were passed; and Napoleon was placed in command of the combined forces of the National and Legislative Guards. A report of these proceedings was carried to him in the Rue de la Victoire, together with a summons to appear before the Chamber to be formally charged with his duties

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and to take the oath of allegiance to the constitution. In the meantime, acting entirely in advance of his authority, he had ordered a grand parade of the troops, and when the emissaries of the Ancients arrived, they found him on the steps of his house haranguing his officers on the perilous condition of the country. He immediately repaired to the Chamber, which he addressed in terms of fervid devotion to the Republic, though by help of the President, who intervened at the critical moment, he managed to evade the actual oath. Thus far all was well. But things did not go quite as smoothly in the Five Hundred, who met later in the morning. The official notification of the Ancients' decree was received by them with an outburst of indignation. But they were silenced by Lucien, who adjourned the meeting. The Jacobin shouts of "Long live the Constitution," with which the assembly broke up, were answered by the soldiers massed in the gardens of the Tuileries with "Long live Bonaparte!"

The train was now laid. The next day it was fired. The Councils gathered at St. Cloud—the Ancients in the Hall of Apollo, upstairs in the right wing of the palace; the Five Hundred in the Orangerie on the ground floor. There was protracted uproar in both Chambers, and in the latter, the temper of the strong Jacobin party was mani-

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fested by their loud cries of "Down with the Dictator! Long live the Constitution!" For two hours Napoleon waited with his staff in a room on the first floor of the palace. Then, impatient at the delay and determined that there should be "an end to this," he went, accompanied by several of his officers, to the Hall of Apollo. Agitated, disconcerted, angry, he made a very poor figure at that moment when the qualities most needed were dignity and self-control. He had calculated on carrying everything before him by the sheer power of his presence and he was in no mood to brook the slightest opposition to his will. He thus fell a victim to nervous irritability. Challenged to specify the dangers which threatened the Republic and to justify the attack on the Constitution, he lost his head; indulged in violent and vague declamations; made statements which he could not support. At length as the discussion waxed fiercer and fiercer, his friends, alarmed by his extraordinary behaviour and his incautious speech, hurried him out of the Hall. Thence he made his way to the Orangerie. This time he took with him not only his picked officers but also four grenadiers of the National Guard—a sure sign that he expected conflict. His appearance was followed by a scene of wild confusion. The Jacobins rushed upon him with cries of "Down with the Dictator! Down with the Ty-

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rant! Outlaw! Outlaw!"; he was hustled, shaken, struck; and it was with torn clothes and in a state of semi-collapse that he managed to make his escape. The situation was saved only by the promptness and resolution of Lucien and by the loyalty of the soldiers who, little concerned about the moral issues, stood by the hero they loved against the civilians they despised. Napoleon recovering his presence of mind, now ordered the grenadiers under Murat and Leclerc to clear the Hall. The roll of the military drums drowned the voices of the representatives of the people; the deputies leaped through the windows into the garden and fled; force, intrigue, and bravado had gained the day; and the Republic was at an end. Paris acquiesced; the country at large, weary of revolution and uncertainty, was ready to entrust its destinies to a master strong enough to ensure internal peace. Only here and there were a few who, like Mme. de Staël, "wept, not over liberty, which never existed in France, but over the hope of that liberty without which a country knows only shame and misery."

The Constitution of Year VIII, promulgated on 13 December, placed the executive power in the hands of three consuls, Napoleon, Cambacérès, and Lebrun. Napoleon had seen to it that the executive should be practically supreme in the state, and he was now equally determined that he should be

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supreme in the executive. As Mme. Permon, at the very beginning of the new régime, said to his mother, "He is a pike who will swallow the other two fish." Mme. Letizia, believing still in her son's republicanism, was shocked by the remark; but Mme. Permon knew what she was talking about. As First Consul he had the reins of government firmly in his own hands, and was already dictator in everything but name.

Though in his own phrase he ruled France "booted and spurred," he desired to pose as a legislator rather than a soldier, and accordingly made overtures for peace to England and Austria, now his only active foes. He was, however, glad when these overtures were rejected, for he had thus an excuse for continuing the war. Two French armies were already in the field: one under Moreau on the Rhine; the other under Masséna on the Italian Riviera. He did not, however, propose that either of these generals, and especially Moreau, at the moment his most dangerous military rival, should win the laurels of the coming campaign. He therefore issued orders which really impeded Moreau's movements, while he secretly raised another army, of which he took command in May, 1800, and with which he made his famous seven days' passage of the great St. Bernard. His sudden appearance on the plains of Italy took the

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The Passage of the St. Bernard

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Austrian commander by surprise. Then, ignoring the plight of Masséna, who was now besieged in Genoa, he struck at the main body of the enemy's force, and on 14 June won an astonishing but lucky victory at Marengo. In that perilous engagement, in which failure seemed so probable and in which the success actually achieved by a combination of daring strategy and good fortune, appeared so brilliant, he had as he confessed staked everything for everything. Then he returned in haste to France to enjoy the glory of his sensational campaign. But the war did not end till Moreau's less showy but more substantial triumph at Hohenlinden. Nelson's naval successes meanwhile thwarted his designs of isolating England, and he was bound to come to terms with that power. By the treaties of Lunéville in 1801 and of Amiens in 1802 a general peace was concluded, and Napoleon stood before the world as the restorer of the tranquillity of Europe. France had every reason to be delighted, for she now took a paramount place among the nations; and the people of France showed their gratitude when by plébiscite they transformed the temporary consulate into an office for life. Napoleon now turned his attention to internal affairs. Years of revolutionary upheaval had reduced the whole country to chaos. It was his ambition "to build and build solidly." He had

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already signed a concordat with the Pope which restored Catholicism in France: an excellent stroke of policy, for it detached the priesthood from the royalist cause and secured for his own government the powerful support of the church. In the constructive work which followed in the period of peace he laid firmly the foundations of a new France. He systematised the laws in the celebrated *Code Napoléon*. He thoroughly revised the judicial machinery. He reorganised the University and the schools. He placed the finances of the country once more on a sound basis and created the Bank of France. In these and other reforms he did not of course work single-handed. He had throughout the advice and assistance of large bodies of specialists in all departments, whom he gathered about him for the purpose, and to whom he delegated the details of every undertaking. The Code which bears his name, for example, was in fact the achievement of a committee of picked lawyers; his financial policy was carried through by experts. It was indeed part of his greatness as a ruler that he knew so well how to choose his subordinates and to make their talents serviceable. But everything that was now done for the stability and prosperity of the country was done under his direction and bore the marks of his genius. This, too, was the most durable portion of his work. His dream of

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empire has happily passed away. His military triumphs fill a blood-stained page in history from which we are glad to turn. The monuments of his statesmanship remain.

On the establishment of the Consulate Napoleon settled in the Luxembourg, but a few months later he moved to the Tuileries, where amid strange memories of the Old Régime and the Revolution he installed himself in the apartments of Louis XIV, while those which had once been Marie Antoinette's were assigned to Josephine. His state entry into his new abode stirred the enthusiasm of a populace which, still hating royalty, lacked the prescience to realise that this was the first step to its revival, and "hope and joy," according to the *Moniteur* "shone in every face." That very day, it is recorded, he gave orders that the Liberty Trees which had been planted in the court yard, should be cut down. The action may have meant nothing, but in the light of future events it seems significant.

His new position and surroundings made little immediate difference to his private life, which continued to be on a very modest scale. But though personally economical, he did not spare money in affairs of state. For himself, he protested to Bourrienne, he did not care for show, but he held that it was necessary to enable the head of a gov-

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ernment to impress the people: "the Directory," he declared, "had been too simple, and for this reason it had not been respected." As a matter of policy, therefore, he at once began to break with the social fashions of the Republic. State functions became the order of the day; he himself gave magnificent dinner parties in the Gallery of Diana in the palace; his colleagues, though completely in the background, entertained in lavish style in their own houses. At first some pretence was made, even on these great ceremonial occasions, to preserve the traditions of democratic simplicity. But by little and little changes crept in. The Tuileries gradually assumed once more the appearance of a court. Formality increased; official manners became more and more elaborate; much of the etiquette of pre-republican days was reintroduced. Signs of reaction against republican ideas were everywhere apparent. The accepted phraseology disappeared. Josephine was no longer Citoyenne Bonaparte; she was Madame Bonaparte. The new calendar, though not yet actually annulled, dropped out of use, and the old one took its place. Sunday and church festivals were revived. The creation of the Legion of Honour was another index of the transformation of manners which was silently going on. Strict republicans might grumble; but Napoleon's reply went straight to the

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A Soirée at Malmaison

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point: "Men are fond of toys, and are led by them." As far back as 1789 Josephine had bought a beautiful house—the Chateau of Malmaison—near the village of Rueil, on the Seine, about ten miles west of Paris, and this was the country residence of the Bonapartes during a considerable part of the Consulate. Thither Napoleon was glad to escape as often as possible from the cares and pomp of state, and there, the stiffness of court etiquette forgotten, he was free to unbend, and to reveal to his more intimate circle aspects of his character which he rarely showed to the world outside. Society at Malmaison was at first extremely simple; manners were easy; the meals short and almost frugal, though seasoned with plenty of the good talk which he always loved. Into the amusements of his guests the First Consul threw himself with all the zest of a schoolboy, turning from the work which still absorbed him for many hours of the day to chase the ladies about the lawns or take his part in their favourite game of prisoner's base. In the evening, there was music, more talk, pleasant strolling about the moonlit gardens. It was all very delightful; but unfortunately it could not last. As time went on the blighting influence of the Tuileries fell upon Malmaison. There, too, life became more aristocratic and more formal. Prisoner's base was soon abandoned as undignified. The

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merry house-parties gave way to brilliant assemblies, elaborate dinners, splendid balls. Later, a theatre was set up, accommodating about two hundred spectators, and Napoleon, who was always devoted to the drama, took great personal interest in the performances which were given (often with Talma's help in the rehearsals) by the amateur company which included, among others, Hortense and Eugène de Beauharnais, Bourrienne, General Lauriston, and General Junot and his wife. At length, Malmaison was found to be too small and too plebeian for the growing needs and changing taste of the great head of the state. In 1802 Napoleon therefore transferred his establishment to the Palace of St. Cloud, where the monarchical splendour which now characterised the Tuileries was at once introduced.

All this time, as wife of the First Consul Josephine played her part to perfection, and her dignity and charm were of immense value to him in all the circumstances of social and official life. It was only by her reckless extravagance that she now disturbed him, but this from time to time gave rise to quarrels and recriminations. Yet though she had now everything to gratify her vanity and her love of admiration—though on all public occasions she appeared amid the greatest pomp, and at the Tuileries reigned as an uncrowned queen,—

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there was bitterness in her cup. To outsiders it appeared that the greatest harmony prevailed between her husband and herself. In reality, their relations were often strained. Now that the Catholic religion had been established again in France, she was anxious to have her civil marriage consecrated by the church; but to this request Napoleon refused to yield, though at that very time he was insisting that his generals should attend mass and have their children baptised. Another source of trouble was that the marriage remained childless; and Napoleon, who even thus early was tormenting himself about the want of an heir, began already to talk privately about a divorce; urged on, as Josephine well knew, by his family, who were as antagonistic towards her as ever. Finally, there were her husband's numerous infidelities to make her jealous and wretched. His liaisons as a rule did not last long, for he never allowed himself to become entangled in a serious passion; but though, as each one ended, he sought to make amends by demonstrations of renewed affection, one lapse was quickly followed by another. Moreover, his behaviour towards her in this matter was marked by singular callousness and brutality. He roughly told her that, considering her own conduct, she had no right to complain of his; blamed her for her sensibility; even made use of her in his intrigues,

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as when on one occasion, on the terrace of St. Cloud, he ordered her to dismiss a certain lady from the palace, because, he said, "I have had enough of her." In his general relations with women the fundamental coarseness of his nature was always evident. There was nothing about his *sauvage galanterie* (as Mme. de Rémusat called it) of that superficial refinement which, we are asked to believe, gave a touch of delicacy and grace to the vices of the Old Régime.

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CHAPTER VII

NAPOLEON I, EMPEROR OF THE FRENCH

HISTORIANS are agreed that the Consulate marks high-water in Napoleon's career, and that his rise to imperial dignity, though apparently a stage in advance, was really the beginning of his decline. His lust for conquest had for the moment abated; as the supreme head of the state he enjoyed a position which temporarily satisfied even his enormous ambition; and though he governed as a despot, yet like the tyrants of ancient Greece, he used his almost unlimited power on the whole for the benefit of the country at large. With order re-established and financial credit restored, France prospered under his firm and judicious rule.

Yet gratefully accepted as it was by the mass of a people sick of upheaval and change, his domination did not pass unchallenged. There were Jacobin irreconcilables who held the doctrines of '93 and hated him as an autocrat, and fervent royalists who were equally hostile to him as a usurper, to disturb the peace, and the government police were kept perpetually on their guard. In October, 1800, they frustrated the plan of a fanat-

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ical gang of republicans to stab the First Consul on the steps of the Opera House. This was an affair of little importance save as a symptom of unrest. But it was followed before the close of the year by a far more serious plot organised by the famous Chouan leader Georges Cadoudal, with the help of two Vendéans, St. Regent and Limoëlan, and the support of the emigrant princes in England. It was known that on Christmas Eve the First Consul was to be present in state at a performance of Haydn's *Creation* at the Opera. The conspirators accordingly prepared an infernal machine which they placed in the narrow Rue St. Nicaise, and which was carefully timed to explode at the moment when his carriage passed by. On this occasion the police were in total ignorance of the impending danger, and Napoleon was saved only by the speed of his coachman, who happened to drive faster than usual. Many of the spectators in the crowded street were killed, Hortense was slightly wounded in the arm by a piece of glass from a shattered carriage window; but he himself escaped unhurt. At first he believed that this determined and all but successful attempt on his life was the work of the Jacobins, and even when the legitimist origin of the plot was proved, it was upon them that he persisted in wreaking his anger. More than a hundred prominent members of the party

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The Meeting of Napoleon and the Pope at Fontainebleau

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were arrested, and though he must have been fully aware of their innocence in this particular matter, he made it an excuse to clear them out of his way. They were therefore transported without more ado to the pestilential swamps of Cayenne.

The failure of this well-laid scheme acted as a deterrent to further machinations against the government, and nothing of importance occurred to disturb its tranquillity until the very close of the Consulate. Then came another outburst of royalist activity, the leaders of which were Cadoudal, who meanwhile had attached himself to the Comte d'Artois in England, and the notorious Pichegru. In this case the police were from the outset cognisant of what was going on, and had only to wait their time; every movement of the unsuspecting conspirators was closely watched; and when the right moment came, the bubble was pricked. Pichegru anticipated justice by strangling himself in prison, and Cadoudal and several others were sent to the guillotine. For the Chouan leader himself, it may be noted in passing, Napoleon had a genuine admiration; he had sought to win him over to his own side; and he spoke of him as a man cast in the right mould, who in his hands would have done great things. Among those on whom suspicion fell of having been implicated in this plot was the famous victor of Hohenlinden.

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That Cadoudal had endeavoured to gain Moreau's support is perfectly true; but it is equally true that his advances had been rejected; for Moreau was too staunch a republican to be drawn into the royalist net. But Napoleon was jealous of his greatest general and seized this opportunity of ruining him. Moreau was therefore brought to trial, found guilty on insufficient evidence, and sentenced to two years imprisonment. This sentence was however commuted into banishment, upon which Moreau went to America.

A tragic episode of the story of this Bourbon conspiracy is, however, more important to the biographer of Napoleon than the main story itself. There was then living at Ettenheim on the Rhine, in the Duchy of Baden, a son of the Duke of Bourbon, the Duc d'Enghien, a man of thirty-two. He had formerly been in the emigrant corps of his grandfather, the Prince of Condé, but since the peace of Lunéville had settled down to private life. Napoleon however chose to believe that he was privy to Cadoudal's plot, and violating the principle of neutral territory, he had him seized and carried to Paris. Thence he was conveyed to the Castle of Vincennes, where he was tried before a military commission, the illegality of whose proceedings was afterwards acknowledged by the president himself, and on his admission that he had been will-

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ing to bear arms against the Republic, was condemned to death and shot at once. The object of this judicial murder was of course to strike terror into the hearts of the royalists. "They will see," said its instigator, "of what we are capable, and I hope for the future that they will leave us alone"; and again, with a significant echo of Louis XIV's famous "L'état, c'est moi"—"I am the Man of the State; I am the French Revolution, and I shall uphold it." Such was his excuse for a dastardly action which, as he told his brother Joseph at the time, he was perfectly ready to repeat if the occasion arose. Regarding his subsequent attitude towards it, the evidence is conflicting; but while it appears that he came to realise that in Fouché's phrase it was a blunder, and was therefore uneasy about it, he seems never to have experienced anything that we could describe as remorse. Apologists have done their best to palliate his guilt, but their special pleadings are of no avail. The crime remains one of the blackest blots upon his memory. The murder was committed on 20 March, 1804. By that time public sentiment, stimulated in many ways by Napoleon himself, was already running strongly in favour of an hereditary rulership under whatever nominal form. The matter had been discussed in the Council of State and in the Assemblies, and now this last royalist conspiracy was

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seized upon as a pretext for bringing it to a head. On 28 April, a proposal was made in the Tribune to change the Consulate into an empire, and this was carried on 8 May, with only one dissenting voice—that of Carnot. On the 18th the Senate decreed that the government of the country should be entrusted to the First Consul with the title of Emperor of the French, and that the question of succession should be submitted to the people. This decree was at once carried by the members of the Senate to St. Cloud. Napoleon met them in the Gallery of Apollo. Cambacérès, as their spokesman, thereupon offered him the imperial crown as a tribute of the nation's gratitude and affection. His face showed not the slightest trace of excitement or exultation as he listened. Absolutely calm, he replied in a few colourless words, expressing his devotion to the country and his willingness to accept the title which the Senate deemed necessary for the nation's welfare and glory. In the plébiscite which followed the Senate's decree was ratified by an overwhelming majority.

The date first fixed for the coronation was 14 July; then 18 Brumaire was proposed; and finally 2 December was selected. The ceremony, it was arranged, should take place in Notre Dame, and Pope Pius VII acceded to Napoleon's request that he should cross the Alps to give him in person the

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consecration of the holy oil. Catholic Europe was amazed that a pontiff who had recently wept over the assassination of the Duke d'Enghien should thus lend his sacred presence to the culminating triumph of the assassin. But Pius had the interests of the Holy See in mind, and resolved to forget not only the crime which he had deplored but also the indignities which Napoleon only a few years before had heaped on the Church by his conduct in Italy and Egypt. He reached Fontainebleau on Sunday 25 November, and was received with a great show of cordiality by the Emperor, who went out with his court to meet him on the way and to conduct him to the palace. On the very evening of his arrival, Josephine confessed to him in a private interview that her marriage had never been sanctified by religion. His reply was that though he could not interfere between the Emperor and his conscience, it would be impossible for him to crown her unless she were first married by a priest. Napoleon was much annoyed, but he was forced to go through the rites of wedlock in a room in the Tuileries, in which an altar was erected for the purpose. Thus Josephine, after many rebuffs, at last had her way, but, as she was soon to learn, her success in no wise increased the stability of her position.

The coronation ceremony itself, carefully re-

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hearsed under the direction of the painter David, was as imposing as money and consummate stage management could make it. A slight hitch occurred at the outset owing to the indignation of Josephine's sisters-in-law when they found that they had to hold up her train. But otherwise everything went off to the Emperor's satisfaction. That satisfaction, however, was hardly shared by the Pope, whom Napoleon treated with an extraordinary want of respect. To begin with, he kept him waiting for an hour in the choir of the cathedral, and then, when the Pontiff made ready to perform the actual rite of coronation, he took the circlet of golden laurel leaves in his own hands, crowned himself, and then placed her emblem of royalty on the head of his wife. Even the Holy Communion which, according to the original programme, their majesties were to have received at the close of the solemnity, was omitted; the reason, it is alleged, being that Napoleon thought the Italian priests quite capable of poisoning the bread and wine. A few months later he gave further evidence of his contempt for the papal power, for on 26 May, 1805, in the Cathedral of Milan, he crowned himself King of Italy.

It may be added that the Pope's presence did not act as any check upon the Emperor's private conduct. Even while the Holy Father was still his

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The Coronation in Notre Dame

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guest at St. Cloud, he amused himself with a particularly ignoble intrigue with a lady who had recently become a member of Josephine's suite.

The rise to imperial rank made little difference to Napoleon's actual powers as a ruler, but it was followed by a great change in all the appurtenances of government. Jealous of the position which, as a man from the ranks, he had now made for himself among the potentates of Europe, the new Emperor was determined to support his dignity by every means calculated to dazzle popular imagination. The Court of Paris soon outrivalled in splendour those of the other capitals of the world. Etiquette was as carefully organised, the details of precedence, uniform, costume, were as minutely regulated as in the days of the Old Régime. State functionaries were multiplied; a host of gentlemen-in-waiting, ladies-in-waiting, pages, and maids of honour were in constant attendance upon the imperial pair. Titles were distributed with a lavish hand. The Emperor's sisters became princesses; his former colleagues in the Consulate, Cambacérès and Lebrun, the one Arch-Chancellor, the other Arch-Treasurer; his principal generals Marshals of France. Later, a new nobility was created, and ministers and marshals were made into princes and dukes.

Yet even though he was now standing on the

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very pinnacle of greatness Napoleon was not yet satisfied. His position at home assured, he again grew eager for war and for the further extension of his power by conquest. His overmastering desire was to humble England, which he clearly recognised as the most formidable of his enemies, and he resolved, in his own words, "to plant the imperial eagle on the Tower of London." The treaty of Amiens had been only so much waste paper, and on both sides of the Channel the peace which it had secured was accepted as merely a temporary lull in hostilities which might at any time be renewed. England was alarmed by his aggressive policy in Italy and Holland, and was ready to take offence at the slightest fresh provocation; and ample cause for offence was given by the Emperor's impudent demand that its government should suppress the numerous prints in which the Corsican Adventurer was lampooned and cease to give asylum to French refugees. In this condition of tension Napoleon determined to take the initiative, and proceeded to make gigantic arrangements for the invasion of England. The enterprise was so chimerical and its failure so certain that historians have been at a loss to understand how he could ever have entertained it seriously. We can only suppose that he was deluded by his enormous self-confidence, and that, intoxicated by his marvellous successes, he

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had come to regard himself, in Junot's phrase, as a sort of "Supernatural being," before whom all obstacles must give way, whom even the elements must abet, and for whom henceforth nothing was impossible. At any rate, he threw himself into the work of preparation with all his characteristic energy; gathered a great flotilla along the northern coast; and established a vast camp at Boulogne, where his troops were kept for months in splendid training. So convinced was he now that the hated island lay within his grasp that he even had a medal struck, with his head laurel-wreathed on one side, on the other the image of Hercules throttling Antæus, and the motto "Descente en Angleterre: frappée à Londres en 1804." But "this lying legend—the eternal monument of the presumption of him who coined it," was, as Lanfrey says, "all that remained of the great enterprise." For that great expedition was after all never to be attempted. Pitt who had now come back into office at once revived the coalition against France, and Napoleon found himself involved in war with both Russia and Austria. The invasion of England was instantly abandoned; the camp at Boulogne was broken up; and at the head of what was now the finest army in Europe the Emperor marched through the German states, utterly indifferent to all claims of neutrality, defeated the Austrians at

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Ulm, and pushed on to Vienna. His triumphal progress was for a moment disturbed by the news which reached him at this point that his fleet had been annihilated by Nelson at Trafalgar. Berthier, who handed him the despatch, has recorded that he gave no outward sign of emotion. Yet the blow was a heavy one, for as he well knew, England was now in absolute command of the sea. The memory of this catastrophe was, however, effaced by his magnificent victory over the Russians and Austrians at Austerlitz—the masterpiece, as he deemed it, among all his engagements—on 2 December, 1805. In that stupendous "battle of the three emperors" as it was called (for Czar and Kaiser led their troops in person) the Russians lost in killed, wounded, and prisoners 21,000 men, the Austrians 6000, and the French 6800. But it was at least a decisive victory, for it smashed the coalition and ended the old Holy Roman Empire, on the ruins of which the Confederation of the Rhine was founded under French protection. Prussia, which had also taken the field, was quickly crushed at Auerstadt and Jena, and on 27 October, 1806, Napoleon entered Berlin. On 14 June of the next year the bloody battle of Friedland brought the campaign against Russia to a close, and the peace of Tilsit, signed with Alexander I, established the Emperor's position as the dictator of northern Europe.

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He returned to Paris in triumph. In the official welcomes which were extended to him orator after orator vied with one another in monstrous hyperbole and servile adulation. The vocabulary of flattery was exhausted in efforts to magnify his greatness, and little was wanted to turn the human conqueror, Roman fashion, into a god. Meanwhile the French populace went mad with excitement. The Emperor had brought them that most costly and worthless of all national possessions—military glory. The blood of the nation had been poured out like water; its finest manhood had been slaughtered by the thousand on foreign fields; the colossal expenses of victory had been met by wholesale robberies of which a self-respecting nation ought to have been ashamed. But what did it matter? The whole country was inflamed by the martial spirit of its master and dazzled by his dream of empire, and all other considerations were thrown to the winds.

The only cloud on his horizon amid all these triumphs was the unbroken antagonism of England. Unable to conquer that stubborn foe by force of arms, he determined to cripple its commercial resources, and by the so-called Continental System which he now introduced, he endeavoured to cut it off from the rest of Europe. By a decree of 21 November, 1806, he declared the British Islands in

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a state of blockade; all trade with them was prohibited; no ship flying the British flag or sailing from any British possession was allowed to enter any French port; and British merchandise was made a lawful prize when captured at sea. Most of the European countries were forced to accept this system. But the sequel showed that here Napoleon had entirely overreached himself. England was able to make effective reprisals; France suffered from its protective policy far more than its intended victim; and in the end it was one cause of the disasters which heralded its author's own downfall.

The thirst for conquest still unassuaged, Napoleon now turned his attention to the south. Dissensions in Spain gave him a colourable excuse to interfere in the affairs of the Peninsula, and by promises of personal advantage to himself, he induced the Spanish prime minister, the intriguing Duke of Alcudia, to permit a French army under Junot to march through Spanish territory into Portugal. His object was to coerce Portugal, an ally of England, into his Continental System. Junot seized Lisbon, and the royal family was obliged to fly to Brazil. On pretence of supporting Junot other French troops were then sent into Spain, and too late the Spaniards realised Napoleon's breach of faith and the shabby

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trick which he had played upon them. The feeble king abdicated at the Emperor's command, and Joseph Bonaparte was placed on the vacant throne. Insurrection, however, followed, and Napoleon, who had expected to master Spain by a single blow, found himself face to face with unlooked for difficulties. Then in August, 1808, a British force under Sir Arthur Wellesley landed in Portugal, and defeated Junot, who was compelled to evacuate the country under the terms of the Convention of Cintra. This was the beginning of the Peninsular War, which henceforth was to drain Napoleon's strength and to harass him continually in his further plans. The seizure of Spain may indeed be regarded as the real turning point in his fortunes. The act itself was so infamous a piece of treachery that the moral sense of Europe was outraged by it. To the moral sense of Europe, it is true, Napoleon was supremely indifferent. But he was presently to learn that, like the murder of the Duke d'Enghien, though in a far more practical way, his Spanish policy was not only a crime but also a mistake. Talleyrand saw this from the first. "This Spanish war," he said, "is the beginning of the end."

To the world at large, however, it did not appear that there were as yet any signs of waning power, for Napoleon's imperial greatness was

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never more magnificently displayed than in the meeting with the Czar, which took place at Erfurt only a few weeks after the Convention of Cintra. The conference, which was arranged to bring about a further understanding with Russia, was conducted with a splendour which outdid the famous Field of the Cloth of Gold, and in all the extravagant festivities which attended it—the banquets, the hunting parties, the theatrical entertainments—the chief actor comported himself with an arrogance almost beyond belief. The Czar alone was treated by him as an equal, and allowed to sit or stand beside him; as for the other potentates who had been summoned—the kings of Bavaria, Würtemburg, Saxony, Westphalia, the Prince of Prussia, the ducal heads of the Confederation of the Rhine—these were kept waiting on the Emperor's beck and call, and by countless acts of petty insolence were made to feel that he held them as of small account. Erfurt put the final touch on Napoleon's glory, and the purpose of the conference was achieved. But we, looking back over the Napoleonic drama as a whole, can see that, as in a Greek tragedy, the moment of highest exaltation was the prelude of the fall.

Austria was now recovering from her prostration, and her attitude became so menacing that, without waiting for specific cause, the Emperor at

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After Aspern

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once re-opened hostilities against her. Victory attended his standards, and on 13 May, 1809, he once more entered Vienna. But an attempt to cross the Danube at Aspern had to be abandoned after two days' desperate fighting, and the French were forced to retreat in confusion to the neighbouring island of Lobau. This was Napoleon's first important reverse, and it weighed heavily upon his spirits; for his losses reached the appalling total of 30,000 men, while the long list of officers slain included Marshal Lannes, who had been with him on his first campaign in Italy, and with whom, alone among his generals, he still used the "tu" of familiar friendship. This disaster, though it certainly shook, for the first time, Napoleon's confidence in himself and his star, was, however, redeemed by the victory of Wagram, and peace was again secured, on the Emperor's own terms, by the treaty of Schönbrunn, on 14 October, 1809.

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CHAPTER VIII

NAPOLEON AND MARIE LOUISE

SOON after the peace of Schönbrunn was concluded Napoleon took the momentous step, long contemplated, of annulling his union with Josephine, and four months later he married the Archduchess Marie Louise of Austria.

An account of the ever-shifting relations of the Emperor and his wife—of their perpetual jealousies, quarrels, and reconciliations—would make a long story. We need not tell that story here. We have to deal only with the circumstances immediately connected with the divorce.

In resolving upon the dissolution of his first marriage, Napoleon was of course governed by considerations of state, and considerations of state in his case meant personal considerations. It was his ambition to found a dynasty; but Josephine remained childless, and the lapse of time had practically destroyed all hope of an heir. On the creation of the empire the hereditary succession had been settled, his own issue failing, in the lines of his brother Joseph, now (1809) King of Spain, and Louis, the husband of Hortense, and King of Holland. At first he had thought of adopting Louis'

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eldest boy, Napoleon Charles, but this scheme came to nothing through the child's sudden death of croup in the spring of 1807. By this time, moreover, he was thoroughly dissatisfied with his brothers, who in various ways opposed his foreign policy. A son of his own thus became an urgent necessity. This was recognised not only by Napoleon himself but also by his ministers, who on grounds of public interest urged him to take action without further delay.

Josephine, as we know, had long had the threat of divorce hanging over her, and had tried by every means within her power—by cajolery, remonstrances, threats, pleadings, tears—to avert the disaster. When finally Napoleon appealed to her, for patriotic reasons, not to stand in his way, she replied that he was her master, that he could decide her fate, and that she would obey his orders. But she told him, too, that she had married him when their marriage had brought social advantage to him rather than to her, and that he would be guilty of baseness in repudiating her now that his fortunes were made. The position which she thus adopted was that of passive acquiescence; she yielded to his demands, but she made it clear that she did so only under compulsion. Did she still love him? is a question we may well ask; did she still cling to him in spite of his ingrati-

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tude, his frequent brutality, his perpetual intrigues abroad and beneath her very eyes with ladies of her own suite? Perhaps she thought mainly of her standing, and of the disgrace which awaited her before the world. But she afterwards declared that when he chose to take the trouble Napoleon could be the most seductive of men, and if in face of the great sacrifice she was called upon to make, other feelings outweighed those of love, we may yet infer that the spell of his strange fascination was still upon her.

Napoleon, too, when the moment of actual separation came, found it hard to break the ties of old association and to reject the woman whom he had once loved with so much ardour. How deeply his nature was stirred by the final rupture will be seen directly. In the arrangements which he made for the divorce he did what he could to break the blow for her. She was to retain her title of Empress; she was to have a court of her own at Malmaison; and an allowance was to be made to her generous enough to meet all the expenses entailed by her always extravagant tastes.

On 16 December, 1809, the imperial family and the great officials of the court were called together and the act of separation was formally read. This document set forth the reasons of state which compelled the Emperor to outrage his personal feel-

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ings and to annul his marriage with his dearly beloved spouse. Josephine was as pale as death as she listened; but she signed with a firm hand, and retired with dignity from the hall. Napoleon, according to Mollien, was scarcely less affected, and wept as he wrote his name. But of those present Eugène was most agitated, and when he followed his mother out of the room he swooned away. When the divorce had first been determined, he had threatened to resign the viceroyalty of Italy, which he had held since his step-father's coronation at Milan, and the Emperor had found some difficulty in talking him over. Even now he was much moved by his mother's fate. Yet it fell to his lot to convey to the Senate the official notification of what had taken place. "It is essential to the welfare of France," he then said, "that the founder of this fourth dynasty should grow old surrounded by direct descendants, who will be a guarantee to us all." And then came the famous words: "The tears which this resolution has cost the Emperor suffice for the glory of my mother." To the French people at large Josephine's action was represented as a supreme and willing sacrifice on the altar of the country.

On the very evening of the separation, Mollien, his treasurer, relates, "Napoleon, as if unable to bear the loneliness of the Palace of the Tuileries,

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left for Trianon, almost without suite. There he spent three days, seeing no one, not even his ministers, and, during the whole of his reign, these three days were perhaps the only period in which sentiments had more power over him than affairs. Every thing was suspended—correspondence, audiences, even councils. He provided only by certain instructions for the new establishment of her from whom he was now divided, and even of these instructions he informed me by one of his officers." On his arrival at Trianon he at once wrote a letter to Josephine to comfort her in the solitude of Malmaison. A few days later he went to Malmaison to visit her, and on his return he wrote: "My friend, I found you to-day weaker than you ought to be. You have shown courage; it is necessary that you should find courage to sustain you. You must not give way to fatal melancholy; you must be content, and above all, look after your health, which is so precious to me. If you are attached to me and love me, you ought to behave with strength and to make yourself happy [*te placer heureuse*]. You can no longer doubt my constant and tender friendship, and you understand very little of my sentiments towards you if you think I can be happy if you are not happy, and content if you do not calm yourself. Adieu, my friend; sleep well; and remember that I wish it [*songe que je le veux*]."

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On Christmas Day, Josephine and Hortense dined with the Emperor at Trianon, and, says a lady of the court, their majesties were so happy together that one might have fancied they had never separated. Even after his second marriage Napoleon continued to write to Josephine in terms of singular solicitude; she was the first person to whom he thought of announcing the birth of his child; and that child was taken as soon as possible to Malmaison for her inspection. Altogether his attitude towards his divorced wife and his feelings for her present a curious study in psychology.

The dissolution of the civil marriage had been obtained by the simple consent of the parties concerned. It remained for the Church to cancel the religious bond. This was a matter which at first presented some difficulties. Emperor and Pope were now at daggers drawn; troubles had arisen out of the Condordat; Napoleon had annexed the Papal States; Pius had replied with a Bull of Excommunication; and Napoleon, by way of rejoinder, had seized his person and carried off the archives and treasures of the Vatican. In these circumstances it would have been useless to look to Rome for help. But it was most opportunely discovered that no appeal to Rome would have to be made, since the Diocesan Officiality of Paris was declared competent to act on its own author-

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ity. That tribunal proved amenable, and the decree of annulment was soon obtained. It would be waste of time to examine the technical subtilties which were advanced in justification. The simple fact is that like the Senate, the Officiality was overborne by fear of the Emperor. Their duty, as his servile creatures, was to provide the means for the carrying out of his will, and that duty they performed, whatever travesty of justice might result. His rule was absolute, and both civil and canon law had to be twisted in accordance with his commands.

To complete this part of our story it may be added at once that Josephine spent the few remaining years of her life pleasantly enough, in part at the Castle of Navarre, but mainly at Malmaison. Her chief source of trouble was, as usual, her extravagance, and quite in the old style there were from time to time misunderstandings between her and the Emperor about her debts. Her fidelity to him in adversity is shown by her desire to join him in Elba. She died during his exile there—on 29 May, 1814—and was thus spared the sorrow of the final catastrophe. On his return to France he visited Malmaison, accompanied by Hortense, wandered mournfully about the grounds, so rich in memories of the early days of the Consulate, and stood for a time in silent meditation beside her

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grave. There was a place in his heart for her still. While the proceedings for the divorce were still pending, the next question—that of the Emperor's second wife—was already under discussion. The essential point was, that she should be one who might be depended upon to give the country an heir to the imperial crown. There was thus far, therefore, no reason why he should not raise a woman of one of the great French families to the throne. Indeed, Daru plainly told him, when he asked his advice, that the French people would be flattered by such a choice; and he went on to argue that a diplomatic union was unnecessary, and that as Napoleon differed from all other monarchs, he might well show his greatness and his superiority to tradition by not imitating their practice of using marriage as a means to foreign alliance. But Napoleon dismissed these counsels as childish, though at St. Helena he professed to have entertained the idea of a French marriage independently, and to have rejected it only on the opposition of his ministers. He was in fact swayed by very different considerations from those which Daru advanced. Assertive and domineering as his nature was, and proud as he was of his position as a self-made man, he knew quite well that he was regarded as an adventurer and an upstart. For this reason he was anxious to take his place in the

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innermost circle of royalty, and the opportunity now presented of establishing his dynasty among the legitimate houses of Europe was too good to be neglected. His second marriage therefore was designed not only to provide a successor, but also to have a distinct political significance and value. Even before the divorce, the rival claims of Austria and Russia were freely canvassed, and the controversy soon divided the court. Talleyrand headed the Austrian party; Cambacérès was foremost among those who favoured Russia: his chief argument being that two years after the marriage Napoleon was certain to go to war with the unallied power, and that he preferred war with Austria to war with Russia. Napoleon himself, to begin with, set his mind on a Russian match, and made proposals for the hand of one of the two sisters of the Czar. But Alexander, while he was profuse in his expressions of friendship and of gratitude for the suggested honour, was obviously loth to come to terms; he temporised; he raised all sorts of difficulties; and the negotiations were so protracted that at last Napoleon himself broke them off. Then he turned to Austria. One night he happened to meet Mme. Metternich, the wife of the Austrian ambassador, at a ball given by Cambacérès. "Do you think," he said to her, suddenly, and without the slightest preamble, "that the Arch-

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Napoleon and Marie Louise at Compiègne

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duchess Marie Louise would accept my hand, and that her father, the Emperor, would give his consent?" Taken utterly by surprise, Mme. Metternich could only stammer out an indefinite reply. "Write to your husband, and ask him his opinion," said Napoleon, and left her. The Emperor Francis proved more compliant than the Czar, and all preliminaries were soon settled.

Napoleon did not now let the grass grow under his feet. He at once despatched Marshal Berthier as his ambassador extraordinary to the Austrian court, to make all formal arrangements for the union. Berthier travelled with a large retinue and in great state, and he carried with him gifts magnificent and costly enough to astonish a young lady brought up as simply as Marie Louise had been: among them, a necklace of thirty-two brilliants, valued at 900,000 francs, earrings worth 400,000, and a portrait of the bridegroom himself set with seventeen solitaire diamonds. The marriage ceremony was celebrated at Vienna on 11 March, 1810, every detail, according to the Emperor Francis' commands, being regulated on the model of Marie Antoinette's wedding, and nothing being neglected which would add to the splendour of the proceedings. It was a marriage by proxy, and the bridegroom's representative at the altar was the Archduke Charles, who only a few months

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before had been in deadly conflict with him at Aspern and Wagram.

Three days after the wedding, Marie Louise under Berthier's escort set out for her new home. At Braunau she was received by Napoleon's sister, Caroline, Queen of Naples, with a large contingent of ladies and gentlemen of the French court. The meeting between the bride and her husband had been fixed to take place at Compiègne; a camp had been established there; and every detail of the first interview had been planned in advance according to the strictest rules of royal etiquette. But Napoleon was too impatient to wait for ceremony. As soon as he learned that the Empress was nearing Soissons, he threw all formality aside, and taking only Murat, the King of Naples, with him, drove off to surprise her on the way. He intercepted her at Courcelles, and heedless of the procedure which had been prescribed, jumped into her carriage and threw his arms about her neck. Naturally enough, the young Empress was taken aback: such a greeting was wholly out of harmony with the official programme. But she appears to have been equal to the occasion. It is recorded that she replied by showing him his portrait, which she had with her, and remarking, after comparing it with the original, that it was not a flattering likeness. The imperial pair entered Paris amid scenes

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of great public rejoicing, and the formalities of marriage were completed by a civil ceremony at St. Cloud and the religious consecration of the union at the Tuileries the following day.

Marie Louise was not a clever woman; she had none of the social graces of Josephine; nor was she beautiful, though with her pink and white complexion and clear blue eyes she had the fresh charm of her eighteen years. But Napoleon was infatuated with her, and in his love for her all the ardour of his first passion was revived. For the three months of the lengthened honeymoon he could hardly be induced to leave her, even on the most pressing business of state; she was, as Fouché said, "the object of his tenderest care"; and he certainly did his utmost to make her happy in her new surroundings. His own dearest wish was realised when on 20 March, 1811, she bore him a son, to whom, in accordance with the tradition of the mediæval empire, he at once gave the title of King of Rome.

In Napoleon's love for his child the most sympathetic side of his character is revealed. He simply idolised the boy, whose advent he had impatiently awaited as the crown of his ambitions, and who now for the moment so absorbed his affections that even his ambitions took a secondary place in his mind. Those who stood near him at the time were struck

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by his devotion. "Access to his study," writes Meneval, "was prohibited to every one; he did not allow the nurse to enter; but begged Marie Louise to bring his son to him. But the Empress was so uncertain of herself in receiving the child from the nurse that the Emperor, who was waiting at the door of his study, hastened to meet her, took his son in his arms, and carried him in, covering him with kisses. . . . If he was at his desk, ready to sign a despatch every word of which had to be weighed, his son, placed on his knee or pressed to his breast, did not leave him. Sometimes, dismissing the great thoughts which occupied his mind, he would lie down on the ground beside this beloved boy, playing with him with all the abandonment of another child, and thoughtful of everything that could amuse him, or spare him annoyance. . . . His patience and kindness for this child was inexhaustible." And the testimony of Constant is to the same effect: "The Emperor loved his son passionately. Every time he saw him, he would take him in his arms, lift him quickly from the ground, put him back, lift him again, greatly enjoying his amusement. He would tease him; would often take him before a mirror and make a thousand grimaces, at which the child would laugh till he cried. When he lunched he would put him on his knee, dip a finger into the sauce, and smear

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Napoleon and the King of Rome on the Terrace at Meudon

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the child's mouth." Even in the midst of the political difficulties in which he was soon entangled, his thoughts still turned to the boy. On his way to Russia we find him writing: "I hope you will let me know soon whether the last four teeth have come through." It is related that a portrait of the baby King of Rome, which the Empress sent to him while he was at Moscow, gave him the keenest pleasure—a pleasure, however, not unmingled with sadness. Already he had begun to feel something of the tragic disparity between the onerous burden of imperial power and the weakness of the tiny shoulders upon which it might soon have to rest. Fate, however, intervened, and the son, though he has passed into history, as Napoleon II, never succeeded to the father's throne. He died in 1832, no longer King of Rome, but Duke of Reichstadt, and an officer in the Austrian army. Ten years before this, that is, almost directly after her husband's death made her a widow, Marie Louise had married the Count von Neipperg.

We have now followed, step by step, the rise of Napoleon to the highest point of his greatness. With our next chapter we enter upon the story of his fall. We may, however, pause on the threshold to say something of the man himself during these days of supremacy. He had realised his wildest ambitions; he had won

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a splendid success; but "the gods sell us all the gifts they give us," and he had paid the price. It is evident, I think, that his triumph, marvellous as it was, had not brought him happiness: he found more real happiness in his love for his baby boy. The imperial crown sat heavy upon his head. The strenuous struggles of many years and the wearing anxieties of his position had set their mark upon him. His hair was already growing thin; his features had hardened; his lips were more closely compressed. Without losing any of his energy, he had lost much of his buoyancy; his health showed the first signs of giving way; he had grown stouter; at times he suffered from fits of lassitude. The soldier-like freedom of his behaviour had long since been abandoned; he was preoccupied and often gloomy; Talleyrand went straight to the point when, in one of his penetrating epigrams, he called him "the man who could not be amused." A sense of the insecure tenure of his power at times oppressed him, and made him suspicious and irritable; and a feeling that after all his manners were not quite equal to the imperial part he had to play (for consummate actor as he was, he never succeeded in acquiring the easy natural bearing of royalty) probably helped to make him stiff and overbearing. The domineering habit had certainly grown upon him. Even in

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society he adopted the tone of despotic power. He made every one about him feel that he was the master. Always, as we have seen a trifle brutal in his intercourse with women, he was brusque and even rude to the ladies of his court. On the whole, we may picture him as a lonely and rather melancholy figure amid the revived splendours of the Old Régime.

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CHAPTER IX

RUSSIA AND AFTER

NEVER had the imperial court been more brilliant than in the early days of Napoleon's second marriage. But black clouds were fast gathering on the horizon.

Conditions at home gave ample cause for anxiety. For a time, the Emperor's protective policy had stimulated French industry, and general prosperity had greatly increased. But its inevitable consequences now began to appear. Trade stagnated; financial apprehension grew rife; distress and discontent spread among the working classes. The Chouans were again active in the west, and the severity with which their risings were quelled failed to stamp out the spirit of disaffection. Moreover, the whole country, the fit of intoxication over, was at length growing weary of everlasting war. The glory of foreign conquest was one thing; the frightful cost of it another; and it was the cost which now came home as a grim reality to those who only a little while before had been blinded by the glory. France began to groan beneath the terrific burden of militarism. The curse of the despot's insatiable ambition fell upon

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thousands of peaceful families all over the land. Continually worn down by campaigns undertaken for territorial aggrandisement, the army had to be recruited by incessant conscriptions, decreed by a servile Senate at its master's bidding. But the victims of his triumphs were obtained only under rigorous compulsion. In 1811, when a new force was being raised for the disastrous Russian war, the number of *conscrits réfractaires*—conscripts who in one or another way contrived to elude service—reached the enormous total of 80,000. The new recruits, who were destined to die on distant fields in quarrels not their own, were now marched to their garrisons, chained together, and under the escorts of gens-d'armes. Is it wonderful that, familiar with such sights, the French people should begin to doubt the divinity of the bloodthirsty idol before whom they had long prostrated themselves? Napoleon's ministers were well aware that popular sentiment was fast becoming alienated from the government. He himself knew that he was losing his personal hold upon his subjects.

These domestic difficulties were complicated by difficulties abroad. The Peninsular War, which had been brought about by Napoleon's rapacity and bad faith, was now at its height, and things were going ill for the imperial arms. At the same time, throughout the immense protectorate which he had

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established, there were many manifestations of the awakening spirit of revolt. Other countries felt the evils of the Continental System far more acutely than France itself; commercial adversity went hand in hand with political oppression; and hatred of French rule grew apace. Everywhere the huge unwieldy fabric of empire which Napoleon had reared by the sword showed signs of decay.

The effect of these conditions upon the Emperor himself was precisely what might have been anticipated. He became more defiant and relentless than ever. Fully alive to the dangers which menaced his power, he was resolved to maintain that power at any cost. He would not yield an inch to opposition, not even, as he said, though the heavens might fall. Against whatever obstructions, and by whatever means, his will should still prevail. To be accounted "unjust and merciless" was, he declared, nothing to him: the one essential requirement was, that he should continue to hold his supreme position among the potentates of the world. "I have made for myself an empire, and I will keep it," he told an envoy of his brother Lucien, who had angered him by criticising his conduct towards Rome; and to Lucien himself he said: "I am not going to give way to *you* after conquering Europe. He who is not for me is against me. If you will not support my system, you are

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my enemy, and Europe is too small for us both"; and in fact Lucien was compelled to retire from Italy. As he grew more arrogant, he grew also more callous. He had come to believe—at any rate he professed to believe—that the "Canaille" —the rabble—as this renegade republican now contemptuously called the masses, "love and respect only those whom they fear"; and on this principle he acted, to this extent at any rate, that he determined to make his people fear him, even though their love and respect might be lost to him for ever. His rule, always autocratic, was now marked by elaborate terrorism. He sought to paralyse public opinion, to destroy all aspirations for political liberty; to make freedom of thought and speech impossible. The police under Fouché's successor, the devoted and unscrupulous Savary, kept up a system of universal espionage, and swift vengeance overtook those who by word or deed incurred the Emperor's anger. The newspapers were gagged and the press placed under the strictest censorship. Mme. de Staël's now well-known book, *De l'Allemagne,* was seized by Savary, the whole edition destroyed, and the writer herself ordered out of the country. When the younger Chénier was thrown into prison because he had ventured to speak his mind, "the time is past for jesting," the Emperor remarked, "let him keep quiet; that is

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the only right he has." Such were the present attitude and policy of a man who had once posed as a democrat and an apostle of liberty!

It was thus that despite increasing antagonism to the Continental System, even in France, Napoleon clung obstinately to it. The humiliation of England, which alone among the great powers had not yet been brought to his feet, was still his dream, and his determination to strike a deadly blow at that stubborn country was now the stronger because it was his firm opinion that the British army was the only serious factor in the Peninsular War. The work of rebuilding the fleet was going on rapidly, with England always in view. But meanwhile it was upon the Continental System that he continued to rely to cripple where for the time being he could not conquer. Instead of relaxing the blockade, therefore, he tried rather to make it more stringent. To this end he annexed Holland and turned it into a French province under his immediate control; his brother Louis, who like Lucien had stood out against him, being forced to abdicate. A few months later, Westphalia was also absorbed. In this way he gained complete command of the whole seaboard between the Rhine and the Elbe. He then proceeded to prohibit all foreign trade with these countries even when the merchandise was carried in neutral bottoms. His next step was to

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make Russia a party to this extended anti-British policy, and in October, 1810, he called upon the Czar to enforce it in his own domains. But the Czar, already estranged by the Austrian marriage, by Napoleon's dealings with Poland, and by his recent annexations in the north-east, replied that while he would adhere to the terms of the Treaty of Tilsit, he refused to adopt the new policy in regard to neutral powers. This refusal gave rise to an acrimonious correspondence, and soon led to the rupture of the France-Russian alliance. In an evil hour for himself, Napoleon resolved to impose his will upon the Czar at the point of the sword.

His plan took the form of a general invasion of Russia. We may well be astonished that, in Seeley's words, he should have chosen to make "a dispute about tariffs the ground for the greatest military expedition known to authentic history." In his own view, however, the conquest of Russia was now absolutely essential to his designs against England, and he seemed strangely blind both to the diplomatic results of his enterprise and to the enormous difficulties and perils which it entailed. There were others who perceived these clearly enough: "the Emperor is mad," said Decrès to Marmont; "he will ruin us all, and everything will end in a frightful catastrophe." But he himself never appeared to realise that he was literally

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courting disaster. Continued success had unquestionably spoilt his judgment. His self-confidence, if disturbed for a moment at Aspern, was still undiminished. He probably expected to repeat the sensational triumphs of his Austrian campaigns of a few years before, and to march into St. Petersburg as he had marched into Vienna and Berlin. He could not, or would not, see that he was now embarking on an undertaking of a very different character. He ought, one would have supposed, to have learned something from his troubles in Spain, where he had stirred the national spirit against him as he was about to stir the national spirit of Russia against him now. But he was not a man to profit by failure; his mind was made up; and he proceeded to carry out the work of preparation with his customary energy and thoroughness.

His army of invasion was the largest which had ever taken the field since Xerxes had led his hosts against Greece. It consisted of 500,000 infantry and 100,000 cavalry, and it carried with it 1300 guns. In rough numbers, the French provided a third of this mighty force. The remaining two thirds were made up in the main of Austrians, Germans, and Poles. The very composition of its materials thus indicated the real nature of the enterprise. There was nothing national about it. It was a piece of mere imperialism.

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It began with a flourish intended to impress the world. In May, 1812, the Emperor, accompanied by Marie Louise, repaired to Dresden for a conference of the allies. Once more, as at Erfurt, but now for the last time, he appeared as supreme ruler in a court of subject sovereigns. The Emperor of Austria, the kings of Prussia, Saxony, Westphalia, and Naples, and a whole multitude of minor princes, were present to do homage to the master. The festivities, which extended over many days, were marked by extraordinary pomp and pageantry, and form, in the great Russian drama, a strange prelude to the tragedy which was so soon to follow.

Then the real business of the expedition began. On 24 June the body of the imperial army crossed the Niemen, and on the 28th, without opposition from the enemy, the Emperor occupied Vilna. There he remained seventeen days, during which he failed signally to take advantage of his position. At this point, indeed, it already became evident, as it was later to be even more painfully evident in many critical moments of the campaign, that he was no longer the man he had been. Formerly so swift in decision and so resolute in action, he now hesitated on the very threshold of his enterprise, and was ready and even desirous to enter into negotiations for peace. But Alexander, with unex-

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pected firmness, refused to consider any proposals while the invaders were on Russian soil, and Napoleon was forced to advance. Valuable time had, however, been wasted, and he had soon reason to regret the delay.

At first he met with no serious resistance to his onward march. The Russians, instead of attempting to block his way, everywhere retired before him. This policy of retrogression has been variously explained. On the one hand, it has been regarded as necessitated by the state of their army, which was too disorganised to risk a regular battle. On the other hand, it has been referred to deliberate strategy: the purpose of the Russian generals being, it is alleged, to lure Napoleon on into the depths of their country, while they wasted the land before him as they went. However this may be, he certainly found his difficulties increase as he advanced; the weather, first hot, then rainy, was against him; supplies began to run short; his huge army proved a little unmanageable and began to get demoralised. Yet, haunted by the memory of his past successes and firmly convinced of the infallibility of the tactics which he had employed with such marvellous results in his previous wars, he refused to be warned, even when the growing dangers of the situation were pointed out to him. He persisted in pressing forward in the hope of

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bringing on a big battle; but though a number of small engagements were fought, the enemy, falling back as he approached, still succeeded in eluding him.

At length he reached Smolensk. Here the Russians at first offered a stubborn defence, but then, suddenly abandoning their position, they continued their retreat towards Moscow. Napoleon had laid all his plans for a second general attack; but during the night preceding the day fixed for this, the invaders were surprised to see dense columns of smoke, and then great bursts of flame, rising above the walls of the city, which soon seemed to be enveloped in fire. "The Emperor," says the Count de Ségur, in his famous narrative of the Russian campaign, "seated before his tent, watched in silence this terrible spectacle." What did it mean? The answer came at daybreak, when the French entered the city. They found it a mass of smouldering ruins. The retiring Russians had left destruction behind them as the victor's spoils.

At Smolensk Napoleon again fell into the mood of indecision. He could not make up his mind whether to go at once into winter quarters, as the advancing season suggested, or to press on at all risks to Moscow. After much wavering, however, he decided on the latter course. In this decision his judgment was seriously at fault. But he still

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craved for the great victory which was essential to his success, but which still, phantom-like, everlastingly slipped from him, and he reckoned upon the immense moral effect which would be produced by the occupation of the ancient Russian capital.

By this time the Russians themselves were getting exasperated by the policy of retreat and delay adopted by their generals. The national spirit had been aroused, and the people at large began to clamour loudly for an aggressive movement against the invaders. To this wide-spread demand for action the authorities at length had to yield. A change was made in the command of the army, and the new general, Kutusoff, was ordered to stand his ground.

Thus Napoleon at last had his way, and the great battle which he had long sought was fought on 7 September, 1812, near the village of Borodino, 72 miles west of Moscow. It was one of the bloodiest of all his battles, and the losses were on his side 30,000, on that of the enemy, 50,000 men. It ended in victory for him, but in victory by no means so complete as it might have been. He might have annihilated the Russian force had he been willing to engage the 20,000 troops of the Imperial Guard. This he was urged to do. But adopting a policy of caution where once he would have staked everything on a single decisive throw, he refused to use

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up his reserves. "If there should be another battle to-morrow," he asked his generals, "with what should I fight it?"; and to their surprise, as Ségur says, he allowed himself for the first time in his life to be checked by considerations of what might happen next day. As it was, the remnant of the Russian army was allowed to retire to Moscow, which, however, they soon abandoned to the victor, taking up a position to the south-east.

Napoleon entered Moscow on 15 September, and established himself in the Kremlin. The next night fires broke out here and there, and by the following day, a strong east wind helping their spread, the greater part of the metropolis was in flames. Russian tradition glorifies the burning of Moscow as a deliberate act of patriotism, like that celebrated by Cervantes in *La Numantia:* the inhabitants, it is said, sacrificed their city in order to save it from the French. This, however, appears to be an exaggeration. The origin of the conflagration may, indeed, be ascribed to the governor, Count Rostopchin, but the work of destruction begun by him was undoubtedly completed in part by a lawless plundering mob, and in part by the French soldiers themselves. The Emperor and his suite made a perilous escape from the Kremlin where the fast approaching flames threatened to hem them in. "We walked," says Ségur, "on an

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earth of fire, beneath a sky of fire, between two walls of fire! A penetrating heat burned our eyes, which nevertheless we were forced to keep wide open on the look-out for danger. A devouring air, fiery cinders, detached flames, seized our breathing, which was short, dry, panting, and already suffocated by the smoke. Our hands were burned in our efforts to protect our faces from the unbearable heat and to get rid of the sparks which every moment covered us and ate into our clothing." It was some days before the fires were extinguished, and Napoleon was able to re-enter the now devastated city. He was deeply impressed by what had happened. "This foretells great disaster for us," he said.

None the less he fully expected that, with Moscow in his hands, he would be able to dictate terms to the enemy as he had so often done before. But to his chagrin, the Czar still refused to treat. This was a fatal blow to all his hopes. It was characteristic of the man that he had calculated so confidently upon success that he had made no plans in case of failure, and now that he had failed he found himself in a terrible predicament. His losses had been enormous; his army was seriously reduced and badly disheartened and disorganised; and now he realised, too late, that it would be impossible to provision his troops through the long rigorous Rus-

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sian winter which was at hand. His faith in his star had at last misled him, and the combined results of his headstrong action and his many delays were now apparent. Still he waited on, week after week, clinging desperately to the hope that the Czar would yet submit. Then, the situation becoming intolerable, he took the only course open to him, and gave orders for the retreat which was to proclaim his humiliation to the whole world.

During these days of anxiety and inaction those about him were astonished at the change which had come over their chief. They noticed in particular the determined attempts which he made to distract his mind. He spent three evenings in perfecting some new arrangements for the Comédie Française. He sat long over his meals, which were usually simple and short. He passed many hours together in a half-torpid state, with a novel held listlessly in his hand. Then, Ségur tells us, his officers whispered to one another that undoubtedly he foresaw that his first retrograde movement would be the first step in his downfall, and that this was why, in a kind of day dream, "he remained motionless, keeping himself a few moments longer on the summit."

Before dawn on 19 October the disastrous retreat began. "March to Kaluga," were the Emperor's orders; "and," he added, "woe to those who put themselves in my way!" As day broke, he pro-

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fessed to see in the clear sunshine and the cloudless sky an omen of good fortune. But, says Ségur, "his sinister expression contradicted the confidence which he affected." According to Ségur's figures, 140,000 men with 50,000 horses left the city. Of these 100,000 led the way in excellent order, with their equipment, more than 150 cannon, and 2000 artillery wagons. But the rest, trailing on behind, in three or four columns several miles long—a confusion of men of many different nations and languages, of women and children, of droskies, carts, carriages of all sorts, even barrows, laden with trophies and food—resembled a Tartar horde rather than an army. "One might have taken it for a caravan, or migrating nation, or, better, one of those armies of antiquity, returning after a great raid, charged with slaves and spoils."

The appalling nature of the retreat soon appeared. Heavy autumn rains had made the roads difficult, and from the very beginning progress was painfully slow. Then severe night frosts set in, and the men, scantily clothed and ill-fed, suffered fearfully from exposure. Several reverses, especially one at Viasma, where Davoût's corps was almost wiped out, then compelled Napoleon to alter his course, and he now resolved to make for Smolensk. But by this time the winter had begun in deadly earnest; snow and ice blocked the way;

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Napoleon amid the Ruins of Smolensk

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the cannon and wagons remained stuck in the ground; the horses died by the score; the men in hundreds. On the 19th of November the Emperor at length occupied Smolensk with the Imperial Guard. But even for these there were provisions in the devastated city for a week only; and the rest of the army, compelled to shift as they could, starved or were driven to pillage. To winter there was obviously impossible; and on the 18th a fresh general movement was made; the sick and wounded, numbering many thousands, being left behind to the mercy of the climate or the enemy. Harassed by repeated assaults, thinned down by fatigue, hunger, and the ever-increasing cold, the straggling rabble daily melted away. No care could any longer be taken of those who fell out through weakness or disease; those who could not keep their places with their comrades were forsaken and lost. The Dnieper was crossed on ice, and on the 23rd the Emperor was joined by two corps under Oudinot and Victor, who meanwhile had been holding the Dwina. Already some 90,000 men had perished or been abandoned since the exodus from Moscow, and of the 250,000 of which the army actually under Napoleon's command had consisted only a few months before, only some 18,000 or 20,000, the reinforcements included, remained. No imagination can adequately picture the awful sufferings of these

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few weeks—sufferings which had their ultimate source in the madness of one man's selfish ambition. Yet worse was still to come. In face of the almost overwhelming difficulties presented by Russian armies on both banks of the river, Napoleon contrived to get the bulk of his army across the Beresina. His daring and his tactics have called forth the admiration of military experts. But the loss of life entailed was frightful. Then the cold became more and more intense, and typhus began to play havoc with the shattered troops. Every successive bivouac was marked by a fresh multitude of dead. It was only a disorderly crowd of ragged and worn-out men which ultimately found its way into Vilna.

Thither, however, the Emperor did not accompany them. The day before—it was 5 December—he left the wreck of his army behind him, and set out for Paris by way of Warsaw, Dresden, Erfurt, and Maintz. At Warsaw he had a long interview with his ambassador, which is noteworthy for the perfectly callous way in which he talked of the agonising scenes which had attended the retreat. He entered his capital on the 17th. Seven months before he had ridden out, bent on great conquests, to take command of a mighty and magnificent host. He now drove back to the Tuileries in a hackney-cab.

His instant presence in France was, he an-

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nounced, demanded by the critical condition of European affairs. For the tragic collapse of the Russian campaign was not the only disaster of that fatal year; on the night of Borodino news had reached him of Wellington's victory at Salamanca and the English re-occupation of Madrid. At home, indeed, there was little immediate danger to be feared; public opinion was paralysed, and the despot's throne was thus far secure. But the evil influence of the great fiasco was sure to be felt elsewhere, and gigantic efforts would be needed to prevent the fabric of his empire from sinking into ruin. Had he really had the interests of his country in the least at heart, he would now have sought peace. But his haughty spirit could not endure defeat and humiliation, and he thought only of recovering his personal prestige. His declared intention was to re-invade Russia in the early spring with a fresh army of 300,000 men. He had never, as he brutally confessed, cared one iota about human life; he had sacrificed it without compunction in order to gain his supremacy; with still less compunction, if less were possible, he would sacrifice it now that his supremacy might be maintained. France was fast growing exhausted; but men must still be provided that his deadly game of slaughter and destruction might be played out to the end. At his dictation, the Senate issued a decree calling out the conscripts

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for the following year as well as those for 1813; the country, mortified by his defeat, responded with extraordinary alacrity to his call; many of the great cities voluntarily furnished men and horses. By one means and another he soon had upwards of half a million of his own subjects at his disposal, and by dint of almost superhuman labours his new materials were rapidly welded and organised. Upon his allies, however, he found that less dependence could be placed. On 30 December, 1812, the Prussian contingent of the Grand Army had gone over to Russia, and this was followed by a general Prussian rising against France. Saxony also joined the enemy. But Austria and the middle German states for the present stood by him.

Napoleon's activity enabled him to take the offensive, and on 15 April he left Paris with the intention of striking first at Dresden, now the headquarters of his principal antagonists, the Czar and the King of Prussia. His dearly purchased victory at Lützen on 2 May restored the city to the King of Saxony, who had now deserted the coalition to make common cause with him. Another notable success was scored on the 20th and 21st at Bautzen; the allies were forced back into Silesia; and on 4 June Napoleon agreed to an armistice. Whether he did this from hesitation or from miscalculation, he made a mistake; his fortunes were

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on the mend; a third great battle might have completed his triumph and re-established his position. As it was, he gave the enemy time to recover strength. He was guilty of an even more serious error when by his refusal to grant certain concessions demanded by Austria, he drove that country, already wavering, into the coalition. This added greatly to his difficulties when in August the armistice came to an end and war broke out again. The early stages of the new campaign produced no decisive results for either side. But meanwhile the allies were gradually converging upon Leipzig, where the French army was concentrated, and there Napoleon suffered a terrific and irreparable defeat. In that "battle of the nations," which lasted from 16 to 18 October, it is estimated that his own troops amounted to 180,000 men and those of the enemy, under Prince Schwarzenberg, Blücher, and Bernadotte (formerly one of Napoleon's marshals and now Crown Prince of Sweden) to 300,000; while the total losses on both sides in killed and wounded must have reached the tremendous total of nearly 90,000. The retreat of the French was marked by utter disorder, and it was only through the failure of the victors to follow up their success that the Emperor himself escaped capture. He pushed his way through the Bavarians at Hanau on 30 October, and on 1 November led the remnant of his

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army across the Rhine at Mainz. The tables had now been completely turned upon him; the long period of aggression was over; and for the first time in his career he had to undertake a defensive war.

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CHAPTER X

ELBA AND THE HUNDRED DAYS

THE allied armies halted on the west bank of the Rhine, and envoys were sent to Napoleon to open negotiations for peace. The basis of their proposals was that France should be left intact within its "natural" boundaries—the Rhine, the Alps, and the Pyrenees. The terms were generous—altogether too generous to please the Prussian war party. But Napoleon's pride rebelled against submission, and he would not bend even to the inevitable. He did not reject the overtures outright. But he procrastinated, and finally made counter-proposals which it was impossible for the allies to accept. They replied on 1 December in a manifesto issued from Frankfort, in which they explicitly declared that the war upon which they were about to enter was not against France, but only against Napoleon.

Let it be clearly understood that at this critical juncture he might, either by submission or by abdication, have saved his country. But it was not of his country that he was thinking. It was simply of himself. He was fighting for his own hand, and he was determined that it should be to the bitter

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end. Though the treasury was running dry, though France was menaced by disaster, though there was dissatisfaction among his generals, though the appeal to the people met with but little response, no considerations would turn him aside from a mad, unjustifiable, and utterly useless war. As Seeley has said: "It is among the most unpardonable even of his crimes to have dragged his unhappy country through another period of massacre, though nothing that could even appear to be a national issue was at stake."

A passage from the *Mémoires* of Alexandre Dumas (whose father, it will be remembered, had been one of Napoleon's generals) may be reproduced here for the sake of the vivid picture it gives of popular feeling in France on the eve of the invasion:

"Those who did not live at this period cannot conceive the depth of execration sounded in the hearts of mothers by the name of Napoleon. In truth, in 1813 and 1814 the old enthusiasm was extinct. It was not to France, the common mother —it was not to liberty, that Goddess of all—that mothers were making the sacrifice of their children; it was to the ambition, the egotism, the pride of one man. Thanks to the successive levies which had been made from 1811 to 1814; thanks to the millions of men squandered in the valleys and mountains of Spain, in the snows and rivers of Russia, in

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the swamps of Saxony, and in the sands of Poland —the generation of men between twenty and twenty-five had disappeared. . . . Conscription began at sixteen, and conscripts remained liable to service till they were forty. Mothers were counting with alarm the years of their children, and glad would they have been to dispute with Time those days which rolled by with a speed so terrible. More than once my mother clasped me to her breast, with a stifled sigh and tears in her eyes.

" 'What is it then, mother!' I would ask.

" 'Oh when I think,' she cried, 'that in four years you will be a soldier, and that Man will take you from me—me from whom he has always taken and to whom he has never given—and will send you to be killed on some battle field of Moscow or Leipzig! —O my child, my poor child!'

"And it was the general feeling which my mother thus expressed." We instinctively recall the great line in which Virgil describes the wild alarm of the mothers on the signal of war: "Et pavidae matres pressere ad pectora natos."

The invasion of France followed quickly upon the manifesto, three armies advancing separately, the first through Switzerland, the second across the middle Rhine, the third by way of Holland, which like Switzerland was now absorbed in the coalition. The rapidity of their movements took even Napo-

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leon by surprise, and after a bad reverse on Feb. 1, at La Rothière, his resolution for the moment seemed to be shaken. Maret (now his secretary of state) has described in his *Mémoires* a scene which occurred, shortly after this defeat, between the Emperor and himself. Maret had been urging the necessity of capitulation. Napoleon, apparently not listening to him, had been turning over the pages of Montesquieu's *Esprit des Lois*. Suddenly he handed the volume to Maret, and pointing to a passage said: "Read that, and read it aloud." The passage ran: "I know of no more magnanimous act than the resolution taken by a monarch of our own times to bury himself under the ruins of his throne, rather than accept proposals to which a king ought not to listen, for he was too proud to descend to a lower depth than that to which misfortunes had brought him." "But I," exclaimed Maret, when he had read these words, "know something still more magnanimous: if you would but sacrifice your fame, and with it fill up the abyss in which otherwise you yourself and France will be engulfed." "Very well," was the Emperor's reply, "you gentlemen may make peace. Caulaincourt [who had done his utmost to dissuade Napoleon from the Russian campaign] will settle it, and I will bear the blame. But don't ask me to dictate the terms of my own degradation."

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This mood of dejection was, however, only temporary, and Napoleon threw himself into the conflict with feverish energy. The wide separation of the enemy's armies gave him an initial advantage upon which he was quick to seize, and in four consecutive days he won four battles against Blücher: at Champaubert on 10 February, at Montmirail on the 11th, at Chateau-Thierry on the 12th, and at Vauchamps on the 13th. Never indeed, the military experts tell us, had he shown greater genius for strategy than in these early stages of the invasion. Such successes improved his chances of closing the war on reasonable terms. Unfortunately, they encouraged him instead to persist in his defiance. Again there was some talk of peace, but the conversations led to nothing. His diplomatic efforts to induce Austria to break from the coalition were also futile. The surrender of Soissons, upon which he had depended to check the Prussian advance, was a serious blow to him. At Craonne he once more defeated Blücher; at Laon he held his ground; but in both cases he lost heavily. His situation was thus becoming every day more desperate. Then on 24 March the allies decided upon a combined attack on Paris, which for want of time had been left entirely unfortified. Napoleon employed his most daring manœuvres in the hope of destroying their communications, and on 27th suc-

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ceeded in routing one of their corps at St. Dizier. But the main armies of the invaders swept on unhindered, and letters from his brother Joseph, the acting lieutenant-general of the kingdom, warning him of dangers from treason at headquarters and imploring him to stop the war, compelled him to return in hot haste to the capital. He hurried forward as fast as horses could carry him, learning on the way that the allies had reached Meaux and defeated his marshals Marmont and Mortier. This intelligence added wings to his impatience. In his eagerness to get to the storm-centre, he jumped into a carriage and drove off, leaving even his escort behind him. But it was too late. Within a few miles of the city a courier met him with the news that the city had fallen, that the party led by Talleyrand had made submission, and that the Empress and her son had been taken by Joseph for safety to Blois. He therefore turned aside to Fontainebleau. His mind was still set against surrender, but he was now willing to conclude peace on the terms proposed before the invasion began. But those terms had been offered while the allies were still on the further side of the Rhine. They were now installed in the capital; conditions were entirely changed; and nothing short of the Emperor's abdication would suffice. Under pressure from his most confidential advisers he formally

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agreed to relinquish the crown to his son and to leave France if the Powers required him so to do. But the Czar demanded that his abdication should be absolute and unconditional, and in this he was supported by Talleyrand, who had meanwhile been intriguing with the Bourbons. On 11 April—scarcely five months after the issue of the declaration of war against him—Napoleon signed the instrument of his deposition, and in the person of Louis XVIII the Bourbons were restored to the throne of France.

It was of course essential that some place of safe exile should be found for the fallen Emperor, and the spot chosen was the little island of Elba, of which he was made king. According to the terms of the treaty, while henceforth he was to be a complete stranger to France, he was to retain the rank, title, and honours of royalty, and his tiny territory was to constitute, during his lifetime, "a separate principality," which he was to own "in full sovereignty and possession." An annual revenue of two million francs was also accorded to him—not one franc of which, by the way, was ever paid.

This then was, as it seemed, the paltry end of the great imperial drama. How bitterly Napoleon felt the stupendous fall from world-power to a petty kingship, which meant inactivity, impotence, and oblivion, may readily be conceived. On the

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very night following the abdication he was seized with sudden illness. According to one story he had in a moment of despair taken a dose of the poison which, since 1808, he had always carried with him, doubtless as a last resort in case he should be made prisoner. It may be, however, that the alarming symptoms were due to nervous collapse, or were a first sign of the disease which was presently to kill him. But whatever the cause, the illness unquestionably represents the temporary prostration of a strong nature under the terrible strain of struggle and defeat.

Nor was failure the only element of bitterness in his cup. His staff, his counsellors, even his servants deserted him. Only a few of those who had flourished through his success remained faithful to him in his ruin. One of these, Caulaincourt, tells us how he went to the Emperor's bedside, when the sickness had subsided, and found him exhausted and dejected. "God did not will it," he said. "I could not die—why was I not allowed to die?" And then—"It is not the loss of the throne which makes life unendurable. My military career suffices for the glory of one man. Do you know what is far more difficult to support than the reverses of fortune? Do you know what breaks the heart? It is the baseness, the horrible ingratitude of men! In the presence of so much meanness, and of the

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impudence of their egotism, I turned my head away in disgust, and have been seized with a horror of life. . . . What I have suffered during the past twenty days cannot be understood." We are scarcely called upon to sympathise with the fallen despot in a catastrophe which was of his own making; our sympathy should rather be reserved for the thousands of innocent victims of his greed and folly. Yet we may still appreciate his feelings in that hour of unmitigated gloom. At the same time, there is something almost grotesque in the fact that Napoleon of all men should now be found complaining of the egotism of other people.

The revulsion of general sentiment against him was cruelly shown in his journey through France to the coast. His farewell of the imperial guard at Fontainebleau was indeed touching, for the rank and file of the soldiers still remained loyal to their chief; he kissed the colours which he had carried so often to victory, and told the men that he purposed to devote his exile to the task of recording the great deeds they had performed together. But as he travelled south he found himself in a hostile country. Towns and villages were everywhere illuminated to celebrate the Bourbon restoration. At Avignon bands of armed men were waiting to block his way, and cries of "À bas le tyran! à bas Nicolas!" (the popular nickname of the devil in Provence)

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went up as he approached. On his arrival at Orgon his effigy was burned by an excited mob amid hoarse shouts and handclappings. So menacing indeed did the behaviour of the populace become that at length he was obliged to borrow the costume and take the place of one of his own postillions. Thus disguised he reached La Calade, near Aix. There the inn-keeper's wife, mistaking him for a servant, angrily warned him against his imperial master. "You may be sure they will make him drink the sea—him and all his followers; and they'll be right; for otherwise he'll be back within three months." And, as she finished sharpening a kitchen knife, "See," she said, showing it to him, "it is well pointed. If any one presently wants to use it, I'll lend it to him willingly. It will be the more quickly done!" That evening, fearing poison, he ate nothing at dinner, and changing costumes with an Austrian general who was one of his guards, he hurried away about midnight without having been recognised.

Only two years before, this fugitive in peril of his life had sat in the palace at Dresden surrounded by subject sovereigns who were there to do him homage!

He left France in an English frigate, the *Undaunted,* and on 4 May landed at Ponte Ferraio on the north coast of his new island-home. A re-

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markable change in his spirits at once occurred. His dejection passed; his courage rose; his love of activity and power again asserted itself. For one who had lately been dictator of Europe, Elba was but a toy kingdom—a kingdom of comic opera. But at least he was to be master of it; at least it gave him something to do. His abounding energy was soon in evidence. It was six in the evening when he disembarked. The very next morning he received the authorities and notables of the island, and then, mounting his horse, he made an inspection of the fortifications of Ponte Ferraio which occupied him till dinner at seven. The following day he was up before dawn visiting the forts and magazines. He spent the 6th examining the mines at Rio Montagne, some distance away; the 7th in making a fresh inspection of the defences of the port. The establishment of his miniature court and government, his army, navy, and departments of administration, also engaged his attention. In their first interview with him, his new advisers were amazed by his intimate acquaintance with their island. He seemed to know more about them, their history, their villages, their industries, their resources, even their manners and customs, than they knew themselves. The explanation of the mystery was simple. Before leaving Fontainebleau he had provided himself with a mass of official documents

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and all the literature about Elba upon which he could lay his hand, and these he had studied diligently on the voyage. His marvellous memory and grasp of details had done the rest.

Shortly after his arrival Napoleon built for himself two residences and in one or the other of these, though he had other palaces, he spent most of his time during his sojourn on the island. The first was on a plateau above Ponte Ferraio, and was called by the natives Palazzo de' Mulini, from the windmills which had to be demolished to make room for it. The second, known as San Martino, was in the country, in a charming situation, with beautiful gardens and picturesque surroundings. Thither he repaired when he needed relief from the noise and heat of the town. On 2 August Mme. Mère, who even in the most brilliant days of Consulate and Empire had always had her doubts regarding the stability of Napoleonic power, joined her exiled son. His favourite sister Pauline (Princess Borghese) also came to him in November. Furthermore he had for a time the companionship of the Countess Walewska, a Polish woman of great beauty, whom he had met at Warsaw during the Prussian campaign, and who even after his second marriage had continued to be his mistress. With her she brought her little boy—his own child. But Marie Louise, whom at first he had expected, and

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for whom more than once he made preparations, never arrived to console him in his banishment. It may have been her own will, it may have been the will of the Powers, that kept her away. At any rate she left Fontainebleau immediately after the abdication and settled in Schönbrunn with her son.

The Emperor's way of life was simple and regular. He was usually up before sunrise and worked or read for some hours in his study. Then came a walk in the garden, a short nap, and exercise on horseback or a drive. The time between lunch and dinner was generally spent in the exploration of the island. The evening was given to chess, cards, or dominoes. It is amusing to learn that Napoleon greatly disliked to be beaten even in games, and was not above cheating in order to gain a victory. No one dared to protest against this except Mme. Mère, who, when she noticed what was going on, would wriggle in her chair, bite her lips, and occasionally break out, with the atrocious French accent which still clung to her—"Napoleone, vous vous trompez, je vous assoure!" It must be added, however, that when he won money by trickery he always repaid it the next day, being satisfied with the victory itself. As a rule he went to bed as the clock struck nine. But sometimes, stirred out of his customary apathy, he would begin to talk about the past, his battles, his conquests, his policy, and

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once started, he would often continue till midnight. Now and then, too, there were receptions and balls. In accordance with a petition addressed to him by the inhabitants of Ponte Ferraio, he began the transformation of an old unused church into a theatre, but the work was still unfinished when his sovereignty of Elba came to an end. In the meantime, however, there were occasional dramatic performances at Mulini.

In these days the signs of physical degeneration were very apparent. Napoleon had begun to grow stout about 1809. He was now immensely fat. Other changes accompanied this unhealthy obesity. He was often sleepy and sluggish; cared more for the pleasures of the table; was more easily tired. His talk too was irregular and spasmodic; at times rambling and incoherent. Yet his old habits of work were still unbroken. "I was born and bred for work," he once said; and work was a necessity for him in his tiny island-kingdom as it had been in the great field of world-politics. His administrative labours while in Elba were indeed remarkable. He left no corner of the island unvisited and unexamined. He sailed about the coasts in his barge, and inspected its harbours and defences. He outlined a plan for conveying water from the mountains to his capital. He repaired bridges, improved roads and cleaned the city streets. He

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superintended the upkeep of his guard of 715 men as carefully as if it had been the Grand Army. The manufacture of chairs and tables for his establishments had his personal attention. It is impossible not to admire the genius and energy which, deprived of their former outlet, still found employment among things in comparison so trivial and in circumstances so depressing.

Meanwhile France was being shaken by a convulsion which threatened the very existence of the nation. The Emperor's departure was followed by a quick revulsion in popular feeling. The accession to the throne of Louis XVIII—"Le Désiré," as his adherents called him—though loudly welcomed by the royalists and clericals soon proved distasteful to the masses of the people. That the Bourbons "never learned anything and never forgot anything" was at once illustrated by that weak and foolish monarch, who, a mere puppet in the hands of ill-advisers, none the less endeavoured to revive the monstrous doctrine, which the Revolution and Napoleon between them had exploded, of the divine right of kings. His harshness towards imperialists and republicans alike and the implacable behaviour of the *émigrés* who swarmed in his train combined to alienate the nation. The army was disgusted by the appointment to high posts of men who had fought against France. The restora-

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tion moreover had thrown everything into confusion; titles to estates and the position of public officials were rendered uncertain; while the dissensions among themselves of the supporters of the new régime added the bitter strife of parties to the other evils of the time. Men have short memories, and it is not wonderful that under these conditions they began to look back regretfully to the despotism of which they had so recently complained. Then the Congress of Vienna met, to focus the reactionary movements which had now gathered head all over Europe, and so far as possible to undo the work not only of Napoleon but also of the Revolution out of which he had sprung. Amid infinite jealousies and squabbles the Powers proceeded to divide the spoils of his dismembered empire. Napoleon at Elba was, it was felt, altogether too near to Europe for Europe's safety, and proposals, initiated by Talleyrand, were therefore discussed for his further deportation to some remoter place. But at home he had his faithful partisans who wanted only an opportunity to act in his interests. It must also be remembered that the French prisoners and troops who had been shut up in German fortresses and garrisons were now allowed to return—perhaps some 300,000 well-seasoned men in all; and these constituted the basis of an army ready, if the right leader were forthcoming, to avenge upon the for-

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eigners the humiliations which they had lately inflicted upon France. In such a state of things there could be no hope for peace either in France or abroad.

By means of occasional visitors, of letters and papers, and of confidential messengers who from time to time found their way into the island, the exiled Emperor was kept informed of what was going on in the outer world. He knew the plans which his enemies were considering for his removal from Elba, and saw that if he were to save himself from their intrigues it could only be by a bold blow struck in his own defence. He realised that conditions in France and in Europe at large gave him an opportunity for one more bid for power. He therefore resolved upon what was perhaps the most daring venture of his whole career. Preparations were made rapidly and with the secret help of friends in Italy and France, and on the night of 26 February, 1815 (that very day the British Resident, Sir Neil Campbell, had written to his government that he believed that a plot was on foot for the Emperor's flight), he embarked on a brig, the *Inconstant*, and made good his escape. He was accompanied by a small fleet of vessels carrying altogether about 1100 men. Mme. Mère, who had greatly encouraged him in his enterprise, remained behind.

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Almost at the outset he narrowly avoided capture by a French man-of-war which had been detailed to watch the island. Then his voyage was delayed by persistent calms. But at length, on 1 March, he landed on the French coast between Antibes and Cannes, and eluding the garrison of the former town, set out at once for Paris. Perils beset the earlier stages of his journey. At Grenoble the troops were turned out to intercept him. But throwing open his grey overcoat to bare his breast, he advanced alone to meet them. "Which of you," he cried, "will fire upon your Emperor?" A deafening shout of "Vive l'Empereur!" was the reply; and with a guard of honour which was assigned to him on the spot, the colonel of the regiment himself at their head, he entered the city in triumph. This was the turning-point of his fortunes. Henceforth he was sure at least of the army. From Grenoble to Paris his progress was marked by scenes of frantic enthusiasm which recalled those enacted years before on his return from Egypt. The news of his sudden reappearance spread consternation throughout Europe. Its effect is mirrored for us with wonderful vividness in the microcosm of Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*. Louis XVIII and his family fled in panic at his approach. On the evening of 20 March he reached the capital and made his way through dense cheering crowds

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The Return from Elba

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to the Tuileries. The staircase and galleries of the palace were thronged with loyal adherents who pressed forward to get a glimpse of their great leader and to assure him of their undying devotion to his person and cause.

Safe in Paris and with the army at his back, Napoleon at once addressed himself to the work of reorganisation. Thus far fortune had smiled upon him. The results achieved must have outdistanced his most sanguine expectations, and were conclusive proof of the continued potency of his name and fame. He was, however, surrounded by enemies, and perceived that for his security and further success he must throw himself entirely on the nation. But those whom he took into his closest confidence frankly told him that, despite the warmth of his welcome, he no longer occupied his old position in the public mind. The temper of France had changed during his year of exile. To return to his old rôle of world-conqueror and despot was impossible. His imperial ambitions would therefore have to be abandoned. His part would have to be that of a constitutional monarch, the upholder of public liberties at home, and the defender of a free democracy against the reactionary Holy Alliance. This new and circumscribed conception of his power he was forced, however reluctantly, to accept. His constitution of 1 May, drafted on liberal lines with

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the help of Benjamin Constant, whom in 1802 he had banished for denouncing his absolutism, was evidence of his change of front. He was thus driven back against his will upon the principles of the Revolution. Europe indeed would not give him time to carry his ideas into practice. But the unrealised promises of the Hundred Days (13 March-22 June) served undoubtedly to transform his whole career in the popular imagination, and helped to create that Napoleonic legend in which the autocrat and oppressor figures as the representative of the modern democratic movement in politics against the obscurantism of the Powers by which he was overthrown.

Those Powers were soon in league against him. The Congress still sitting at Vienna lost no time in issuing a proclamation in which he was declared to be "an enemy and disturber of the peace of the world." The Coalition was revived, and an immense concerted plan was devised to crush him before he had a chance to regain strength to meet the attack.

It was now that those about him became painfully aware of his inability to cope successfully with the enormous difficulties by which he was beset. "I cannot resist the conviction," says Pasquier, who based his judgment on the information of men who were in daily and intimate relations with the Em-

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peror, "that his genius and his physical powers were alike in a profound decline." Attacks of illness had told upon him; even more, the fearful strain of the weeks following his return to France. "I do not know him again," said Carnot. "He talks instead of acting—he, the man of rapid decision. He asks opinions—he, the imperious dictator, who seemed insulted by advice. His mind wanders, though he used to have the power of attending to everything when and as he would. He is sleepy, and he used to be able to sleep and wake at pleasure." His constant drowsiness was indeed a distressing feature of his condition; his ministers when they waited upon him were often surprised to find him dozing over a book. Still more astonished were they by his endless, discursive, and sometimes aimless talk. Napoleon was only forty-six; but since early manhood he had lived at tremendously high pressure, and his nervous system was at last beginning to give way. Ten years before he might still have snatched victory and a new lease of supremacy from the struggle which was impending. As it was, he went forth to meet his doom.

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CHAPTER XI

WATERLOO AND ST. HELENA

NAPOLEON'S plan of campaign was brilliantly conceived, and it seems to be agreed by military specialists that if the execution had been equal to the design it might have been crowned with success. Two armies were in the field against him: a mixed force under Wellington in Belgium, and a Prussian force under Blücher on the Rhine. His project, based upon the tactics which he had employed so effectively in 1796, was to throw himself between these two armies before they had time to join, defeat them separately, and then occupy Brussels. This he calculated would bring about the fall of the Coalition and put him in a position to make peace on satisfactory terms. This view was undoubtedly well-founded; for as the Prussian general, Gneisenau, wrote after Waterloo, "What would have become of the Coalition and of the whole story of the Congress, if the battle had been lost?"

It was, however, the essence of the programme that it should be carried out with the utmost rapidity; and it was at this point that Napoleon failed.

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There was delay to begin with in getting the expedition started, and at a time when even hours were of value, many were wasted at critical stages of the campaign. It is, I think, admitted by experts—even by English experts—that so far as mere tactics were concerned, Napoleon had the advantage of both Wellington and Blücher, the former of whom in particular committed several serious blunders and was distinctly outgeneralled at various points. But while the great captain's brain was as clear as ever, the old fire and dash were wanting.

His state of health had doubtless much to do with this. When he left Paris on 12 June he was evidently in no condition to undertake the arduous task to which he had set his hand, for he was suffering from bodily illness and great mental depression. Superstitious as ever, he had now lost his self-confidence. His former implicit faith in his star was gone. He believed that fate had at last turned against him, and was filled with gloomy forebodings of disaster. "It is the feeling that fortune is with us," he said, "that gives us courage to dare;" and this assurance he no longer possessed.

At the outset, however, the great game went precisely as he had planned. On the 15th he reached Charleroi, and the next day defeated Blücher at Ligny before Wellington, held in check at Quatre-

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Bras, had time to come to his help. But he failed entirely to take advantage of this, his last victory. He was hampered, it is true, by the inefficiency of his staff and by dissensions among his officers. But his own inertia was mainly at fault. Fatigue and torpor overtook him; on the morning following the battle he slept late; orders which should have been issued at dawn were not given until nearly midday; and it was not till the afternoon that Gruchy with 33,000 men was sent after the retreating Prussians, while Napoleon himself turned to meet Wellington. This delay proved fatal. Gruchy took the wrong direction; the Prussians got away; and Blücher, abandoning his position, was able to set out to the reinforcement of his British ally.

Meanwhile the Iron Duke had been allowed to withdraw safely and in perfect order towards Brussels, and on the evening of the 17th, with full certainty of Blücher's support, he had his force of some 67,000 men (about one third British) disposed for battle on the heights of St. Jean, near the village of Waterloo. Thither Napoleon advanced upon him with, in rough numbers, 70,000 men; his potential strength being greatly decreased by the absence of Gruchy in futile pursuit of the Prussians. He was all eagerness to encounter the English, and his only fear, as he watched their

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camp-fires during the night, was that they might elude him. "Ces anglais!" he exclaimed, when daylight revealed them on the ridges of their hill, "Enfin je les tiens!" At this point his old confidence seems for the moment to have returned to him. Yet despite his anxiety for a conflict which he knew must be decisive, it was half past eleven before he opened the attack. The explanation which he himself gave of this tardiness in action was that the recent rains had made the roads too heavy for the movement of the artillery, and that it was necessary to wait till they had dried a little. This excuse is regarded as inadequate. At any rate the delay was in Wellington's favour for it gave additional time for Blücher's approach. These wasted hours Napoleon devoted to an elaborate review of his troops.

The great battle, which began in earnest about half past one, consisted of five distinct attacks by the French upon Wellington's position. From the first the tide of war ran against Napoleon. His prospects brightened with Ney's capture of La Haye Sainte, about six. But already the Prussians had begun to take part in the action, and a little later, the appearance of their first corps on the field virtually decided the day. This is not to be set down to happy accident. It was part of the concerted scheme arranged between the two

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commanders, and Wellington had certainly counted on it throughout. About the same time Wellington ordered a general advance, and before this Napoleon's formations crumbled in ruins. The Old Guard made one last magnificent stand against the irresistible onset, and was wiped out almost to a man. But with cries of "sauve qui peut!" the rest of the army fled in disorder, and as darkness fell the battle was lost and won. In proportion to the numbers engaged the losses on both sides were very heavy. Those of the allies amounted to over twenty thousand; those of the French, including prisoners, to thirty-two thousand.

Napoleon's behaviour on the day was marked by the curious sluggishness which he had shown throughout the campaign. In striking contrast with Wellington, who was always present in person where the fighting was most critical, he remained on the hill of Rossomme, whence he watched the battle with some apathy, and whence he issued his commands. When the catastrophe which settled his fate was evident, he calmly remarked, "Il paraît qu'ils sont mêlés," and rode slowly from the field.

Waterloo, of course, meant much more than the downfall of Napoleon. It meant the triumph of the Coalition, of the principles of the Congress of Vienna, and of the forces of reaction throughout

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European politics. But with this, its broader historical aspect, we are not here concerned. Our interest is only in Napoleon himself.

Eluding pursuit, the defeated Emperor hurried back to his capital. By daybreak on the 19th he was at Charleroi; by six o'clock in the morning of the 21st—only nine days after his departure—he was again in Paris. Lavallette, who was summoned to his presence soon after his arrival, has given a vivid picture of his bearing: "As soon as he saw me he came to me with a fearful epileptic laugh. 'Ah, my God! my God!' he said, raising his eyes to heaven, and paced two or three times round the room. This emotion was only temporary; he quickly recovered his self-possession, and asked what was happening at the Chambers." One more last struggle he made to save his position; but the Chambers were against him and his energies and resources were alike exhausted. Faced by open opposition and surrounded by treachery and intrigues, he fled to Malmaison, and there the following day he signed his second abdication, proclaiming his son, under the title of Napoleon II, Emperor of the French.

Even now he was loth to drop entirely into obscurity. He even offered his services as general to the Provisional Government which had been set up with Fouché at its head. But Fouché's reply

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was that for his own sake Napoleon had better leave the country at once. This warning was to all intents and purposes an order. Without making any further attempt to assert himself, he accordingly, on the evening of the 29th, set out from Malmaison, bound for Rochefort, where he intended if possible to embark for the United States. But even his flight, upon which his personal safety, perhaps his life, depended, was marked by dilatoriness and indecision. He did not reach Rochefort till 3 July, and then, though several promising opportunities of escape presented themselves, he failed to avail himself of them. Instead of making a bold dash for freedom, he waited about, asking advice from those near him, weighing their contradictory counsels, and unable to make up his mind. Finally realising that he had allowed his chances to slip through his fingers, and that it was now impossible to elude the vigilance of the English cruisers which were watching for him, he went on board the *Bellerophon* and surrendered himself to Captain Maitland. This was on 15 July. The day before he had sent emissaries to the Captain in the hope of making terms. But Maitland very naturally replied that to make terms was altogether beyond his authority, and that he could promise no more than to convey him safely to England; everything else must be left to the British Government. He

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was therefore required to yield unconditionally; and this he did with the simple words addressed to the Captain "I come to put myself under the protection of your Prince and your laws." In such surrender, as he knew, lay the only chance of his life. At the same time he despatched to the Prince Regent the following very characteristic letter: "Royal Highness—A prey to the factions which divide my country and to the enmity of the Powers of Europe, I have terminated my public career, and I come, like Themistocles, to seat myself at the hearth of the British people. I place myself under the protection of its laws, which I claim from your Royal Highness as the most powerful, the most constant, and the most generous of my enemies."

The *Bellerophon's* voyage to England was slow but uneventful. Napoleon found some distraction in the pages of Ossian, whose poems, in the Abbé Cesarotti's Italian translation, had been his favourite reading in his youthful days. He chatted with the officers; he was taken over the vessel by them, and showed much of his usual curiosity regarding all its details; he plied them with questions about English manners: "It is very necessary that I should adapt myself to these, since it is probable that I shall spend the rest of my life in England." It was in full confidence that England was destined to be his future home, and that he would be per-

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mitted to settle down there to the placid existence of a country genleman, that on the 24th he found himself gazing from Torbay on the coast of the island he had hated so bitterly and the conquest of which had been his dream.

One touching incident had occurred during the voyage. It is described by Lord Roseberry in language at once so simple and so graphic that I may be forgiven for reproducing the passage in its entirety:

"At dawn, one morning, when the ship was making Ushant, the watch, to their unspeakable surprise, saw the Emperor issue from his cabin and make his way with some difficulty to the poop. Arrived there he asked the officer on duty if the coast were indeed Ushant, and then taking a telescope he gazed fixedly at the land. From seven till near noon he thus remained motionless. Neither the officers of the ship, nor his staff as they watched him, durst disturb that agony. At last, as the outline faded from his sight, he turned his ghastly face, concealing it as best he could, and clutched at Bertrand, who supported him back to his cabin. It was his last sight of France."

He was detained on board the *Bellerophon* while the English Government deliberated over his fate. Public opinion, as expressed in the newspapers, was much divided on the subject. Liberal thought

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ran strongly against Lord Liverpool's ministry. There were many who held that the country which had given hospitality to the *emigrés* and had allowed the exiled Louis XVIII to live at peace in his mansion at Hartwell in Buckinghamshire, might well grant a similar asylum to the fallen Titan. Others again suggested that if this could not be, he should be lodged in a castle in some remote part of Scotland; others again proposed the Tower of London. But the Government held that the safety of Europe could be guaranteed by nothing less than his deportation to some distant and practically inaccessible spot; and their choice fell upon St. Helena, the name of which had already been mentioned when the question of his removal from Elba was under consideration. The reasons stated for the selection were that the climate of the island was healthful and that its situation was such as to permit of his being treated there with greater indulgence than, with equal security, would be possible in any other place.

This decision was a great surprise and a heavy shock to Napoleon, and he at once entered a formal and dignified remonstrance against it. "I here protest solemnly," he wrote, "in the face of heaven and of men, against the violence which is done to me, against the violation of my most sacred rights, in disposing by force of my person and my liberty.

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I went freely on board the *Bellerophon.* I am not the prisoner, I am the guest of England. I have come, even, at the instigation of the captain, who told me that he had orders from the Government to receive me and convey me to England with my suite, if that were agreeable to me. If the Government, in giving orders to the captain of the *Bellerophon* to receive me and my suite only meant to set a trap for me [*n' a voulu que de me tendre une embuche*] they have forfeited their honour and stained their flag. . . . I appeal to history: history will say that an enemy who for twenty years made war on the English people came freely in his misfortune to seek an asylum under their laws. What more striking proof could he have given of his esteem and his confidence? But how did England reply to such magnanimity? She pretended to hold out a hospitable hand to this enemy in order to destroy him."

No reply was vouchsafed to this protest, and on 6 August Napoleon was transferred from the *Bellerophon* to the *Northumberland,* which was designated to convey him to his place of exile. He arrived at St. Helena on 15 October, accompanied by a few faithful followers who had elected to share his adversity with him: Counts Montholon, Las Cases, and Bertrand, who took their families with them, and the unmarried General Gourgaud (the same

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who nearly fought a duel with Sir Walter Scott). A considerable body of servants was also in attendance.

It does not fall within the scope of our story to discuss the policy of the English Government in sending Napoleon to St. Helena. Controversy on this subject has been long and fierce, and it is likely to last as long as interest in the man himself continues. On the one hand it has been argued that the most drastic measures were necessary to ensure the peace of Europe, and that it was really by an act of clemency that the Emperor's life was spared. On the other hand it is urged that his career had obviously come to an end, that he could no longer reasonably be regarded as a source of public danger, and that his banishment was therefore prompted by spite rather than by considerations of caution. But whatever our own judgment in this matter may be, it must I think be conceded that England through her ministers showed a lamentable lack of generosity and chivalry towards her great prisoner of state. Not satisfied with condemning him to perpetual imprisonment on a tiny island quite out of the world, she loaded him with petty indignities. These need not now be dealt with in detail. The refusal to permit him to retain his title and even the empty semblance of royalty—henceforth he was officially only General Bonaparte—may be cited

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as an illustration. Doubtless Napoleon was himself guilty of some littleness of mind in treating this refusal seriously and in allowing it to embitter his life. But it is none the less an indication of the niggardly and contemptible spirit in which the whole policy of the Liverpool ministry was carried out.

One of their greatest mistakes—a mistake which was the cause of many troubles—was the appointment of Sir Hudson Lowe as the Governor of St. Helena and the custodian of the prisoner. About this notorious person and his doings during his six years' tenure of his unenviable office a vast literature has grown up of memoirs, apologies, attacks, defences, rejoinders, and counter-rejoinders. Here it will be enough to say that even if the most lenient view of his character be taken and the utmost allowance made for the difficulties of his position, he must still be recognised as a tactless, fussy, interfering, indiscreet, and thoroughly disagreeable man—as, in fact, the very last man in the world who should have been entrusted with responsibilities demanding precisely the qualities which he did not possess. The blunder committed by the government in his selection was admitted even by the Duke of Wellington, whose judgment in the matter may certainly be accepted as final. "Sir Hudson Lowe," the Duke declared, "was a very bad choice;

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he was a man wanting in education and judgment. He was a stupid man; he knew nothing at all of the world; and, like all men who know nothing of the world, he was suspicious and jealous." Sooner or later he quarrelled with everybody who had anything to do with him; and his incessant quarrels with Napoleon fill hundreds of pages in many volumes, and make very pitiful reading. They must not, however, detain us here.

Life at St. Helena was of course painfully cramped and monotonous. Physical conditions—and this was another of Napoleon's grievances against the English Government—were very unfavourable. His house, called Longwood, was a small, damp, ramshackle, rat-infested place, badly situated, and exposed alike to sun and wind. Even elementary comforts were wanting in it. Yet the dethroned Emperor, tenacious of his shadowy dignity and prerogatives, kept up, amid these strange surroundings, the utmost possible show of state. When he drove out, it was in a carriage with six horses, with equerries in attendance. His little household was still a court, and etiquette at Longwood was as severe as it had been at the Tuileries. His gentleman-in-waiting hung upon the imperial command; had audiences of him according to the strictest regulations; stood in his presence (sometimes for hours together and until they were ready

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to drop with fatigue) unless express permission were given them to sit down. His dinners, though they seldom lasted more than forty minutes, were formal functions; they were superintended by his maître d'hôtel; the waiters were his French servants in rich uniform; gold and silver plate and magnificent Sèvres China adorned the table; the coffee service, also of Sèvres, was, Sir George Bingham declared, the finest he had ever seen. In this way the great potentate in his downfall to some extent made up for the indignities which the English had heaped upon him.

Even in the first years of his exile, he took but little outdoor exercise, and as time went on this little grew less and less, though nearly to the end he found some interest in his garden. Most of his time he remained indoors, reading, dictating, and talking. To while away the evenings recourse might be had to billiards, cards, and chess. As the last-named is supposed to be pre-eminently the game for intellectual people, it seems a little curious that he played it so badly that his courtiers often found it difficult not to defeat him. Want of exercise undoubtedly increased his lethargy. Often restless at night, he habitually passed the morning hours in bed, breakfasting late, alone, in his dressing-gown, and rarely making a public appearance before two. Even then he spent much of the day

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Napoleon at St. Helena

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lolling on the sofa. His principal room contained a number of mementoes of the past; among them, portraits and a bust of the King of Rome, a portrait of Marie Louise, and a miniature of Josephine.

His chief relief was in his books, with which he was kept plentifully supplied, and the arrival of a fresh consignment of which was the most exciting event of his dreary existence. He retained his old taste for classical French tragedy—for Corneille in particular, but in a smaller degree for Racine and Voltaire. Ossian too was still a faithful friend. He also enjoyed Homer, the Greek tragic poets, *Paradise Lost, Clarissa Harlowe,* and Hume's *History of England*—all of course in translations; and he often read the Bible.

On the whole Napoleon endured his fate—which for a man of his temperament and achievements was a thousand times worse than death—calmly and with a stoical courage worthy of admiration. Yet, as may well be imagined, a great gloom often settled upon him, and he suffered from frequent fits of depression. Mere boredom might have accounted for these even if there had been no other things to cause them. Reproving Gourgaud for his everlasting grumbling, he once said to that faithful but ill-tempered courtier, "You speak of sorrow—you! And I! What sorrows have I not had! What things to reproach myself with!

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You at any rate have nothing to regret!" And again: "Do you not suppose that when I wake at night I have not bad moments—when I think of what I was and what I am?" The hopeless outlook of perpetual imprisonment and inactivity sometimes weighed him down: "I, though I have long years of life before me," he once exclaimed, "am already dead. What a position!" He brooded continually, with vain regret, over his career, his missed chances, his mistakes. He had not even the feeling of the permanence of his work and fame to support him. More than once he declared that his labours would perish with him and that he himself would be ignored by history. "For the sake of history I should have died at Moscow, Dresden, or Waterloo."

We have many pen-portraits of Napoleon during these last years from the hands of those who were brought into close relations with him. One of these may be here reproduced. It is that contained in the *Diary* of Lady Malcolm, who, with her husband the Admiral, kept on excellent terms with him during their residence on the island. The date of the entry is 25 June, 1816.

"His hair of a brown-black, thin on the forehead, cropped, but not thin in the neck, and rather a dirty look; light blue or grey eyes; a capacious forehead; high nose; short upper lip; good white even teeth,

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but small (he rarely showed them); round chin; the lower part of his face very full; pale complexion [other observers speak of his complexion as "sallow," "olive," "very uncommon"]; particularly short neck. Otherwise his figure appeared well proportioned, but had become too fat; a thick, short hand, with taper fingers and beautiful nails, and a well-shaped leg and foot." Lady Malcolm adds that she was struck by the kindness of his look, "so contrary to the fierceness she had expected," and that his countenance seemed to indicate "goodness" rather than "great ability." Others note his expression of good humour, but record that it would change rapidly to a dark and sinister scowl.

Despite his professed belief, in the phrase which I have quoted, that he had many years of life before him, Napoleon was already ill when he landed at St. Helena, and from that time forward he slowly but steadily grew worse. It was not, however, till 1820 that his symptoms gave ground for serious alarm, and even then it was not realised that he was suffering from the fearful disease which had killed his father—cancer of the stomach. Early in April of the following year the correct diagnosis was at length made and the gravity of his condition recognised; but only a week or so before the end did his physicians perceive that the case was hopeless. For some nine days he was almost continually de-

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lirious through weakness and the intensity of his pain. On 3 May, in accordance with his own directions previously given, the rites of extreme unction were administered. The next day he began to sink. Just before six in the evening of the 5th, while a fierce storm was raging outside, he peacefully breathed his last.

A cast of his face was taken before the corpse was placed in the coffin. It was deemed satisfactory. But, said the faithful Marchand, "it is the face of the moment; not that of six hours after death, which was the face of the First Consul."

His desire had been that his ashes should be laid "on the banks of the Seine, in the midst of the French people he had loved so well." But Lowe refused to sanction the removal of the body from the island, and he was buried on the 9th in the garden of Longwood, in a spot which he himself had designated as his second choice. Nineteen years later, permission for the removal of the remains was granted by the English Government; and they now repose, as every visitor to Paris knows, beneath the great dome of the Invalides.

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CHAPTER XII

NAPOLEON THE MAN

SEEN through the distorting mists of the great legend which has gathered about him, Napoleon looms before us, like the spectre of the Brocken, as a figure of almost superhuman proportions. These mists cleared away, his stature and achievements alike become human.

It is essential to begin with to view his career in connection with the age in which he was born. Until this is done he remains a gigantic mystery. "He will go far," said one of his early teachers, "if circumstances favour him." Circumstances did favour him. They gave him in fact his opportunity. Even the greatest genius needs the co-operation of external conditions without which it will spend much of its force in vain; and but for the vast upheaval of the Revolution, which came to a head just at the moment when he himself reached manhood, we may rest assured that the Corsican soldier of fortune would have filled a very small place in history. He himself once declared that had he lived in the time of Louis XIV, he would doubtless have risen to the rank of marshal. As Prof. Seeley has said:—"There are times, and these are

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the most usual, when the most wonderful abilities would not have availed to raise any man from such a station as that into which Napoleon was born to the head of affairs. But the last years of the eighteenth century formed an exceptional period, in which such an ascent was not only possible in France, but—and this is carefully to be marked—was quite possible without very extraordinary abilities." Exceptional periods breed exceptional men because they give every man his chance; and in Napoleon's case there were "extraordinary abilities" to meet the extraordinary occasion. We think of him as beyond most men a maker of history. But quite as much as all other makers of history he was also made by history. His powers were his own; but circumstances rendered them effective.

The more closely this fact is considered the more apparent becomes the immense part which sheer good fortune played in his successes. One factor in his strength was the weakness of his adversaries. This has been pointed out by Dr. Holland Rose. "Never," writes that very careful historian, "had mortal man so grand an opportunity of ruling over a chaotic continent; never had any great leader antagonists so feeble as the rulers who opposed his rush to supremacy. At the dawn of the nineteenth century the old monarchies were effete. Insanity reigned in four dynasties, and weak or time-serving

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counsels swayed the remainder. For several years their counsellors and generals were little better. Napoleon never came face to face with thoroughly able, well-equipped, and stubborn opponents until the year 1812." This last sentence in particular needs the utmost emphasis. It shows that Napoleon's amazing succession of unbroken triumphs was after all not so miraculous as it often seems. It shows us too that the growing power of his enemies as well as the failure of his own must be recognised among the tributary causes of his downfall. It is a point of detail which should never be forgotten that of the prominent generals who met him in various great battles most were over sixty when they came into collision with him for the first time. His own comparative youth counted enormously in his most brilliant military achievements.

Napoleon himself, naturally prone though he was to make the most of the purely individual factor in his fortunes, none the less admitted that in sundry smaller ways accident had greatly helped him. He told Las Cases that the fact that his was not a noble family was itself in his favour during the early years of the Revolution; that his foreign origin was an advantage since it facilitated his first successes in Italy; that he benefited substantially by his marriage with Josephine, which brought him into friendly relations with the royalists, and by the

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number of his brothers and sisters, which enabled him, through appointments and alliances, to multiply his means of influence. These are not very important considerations, it is true, but as Napoleon himself deemed them worthy of attention we shall do well to bear them in mind.

Thus much it has been necessary to premise in order to bring the man Napoleon into his proper historical perspective—the perspective which I have sought to preserve throughout the foregoing narrative—as a safeguard against those extravagant ideas regarding his genius and powers which are always current when the impersonal aspects of his career are ignored. The way cleared, a brief analysis of his extremely complex character must now be undertaken.

Stress may first be laid upon a feature which itself defies analysis and can never be explained, but which yet perhaps formed the foundation of his power—I mean, the dæmonic element which for want of a better name we call force of personality, or personal magnetism. He was ill-bred; he was coarse; he was often brutal; he carried the manners of the camp into the *salon* and the court; but even when he was most hated, feared, or despised, he never failed to dominate. He was a man born to have his own way. Such was his extraordinary ascendancy that everybody yielded and every ob-

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stacle went down before him. This was the secret of his wonderful appeal to his armies, who followed him blindly even when he led them to destruction. It was the secret too of his amazing influence over men who, with nothing of the unintelligent enthusiasm of the common soldier to disturb them, still felt the magnetism of his presence. The tough-fibred and unimpressionable Augereau confessed that, though he did not know how or why, he seemed instantly crushed by him. "Mon cher," said General Vandamme to Marshal d'Ornano, "this devil of a man exercises a fascination over me of which I can give no account. So it is that I, who fear neither God nor devil, am ready to tremble like a child when I approach him." He had the strange faculty of winning over or bearing down even those who were prejudiced against him. Ussher who conducted him to Elba, Maitland who conveyed him to England, alike fell under his spell; the crews of the *Bellerophon* and the *Northumberland* discovered that their Corsican Ogre was "a fine fellow" who did not deserve his fate! Lord Keith declared with an oath that if Napoleon had obtained a personal interview with the Prince Regent, in half an hour the two would have been the best friends in the world. At St. Helena the Russian Commissioner said:—"What is most astonishing is the ascendancy that this man, dethroned, a prisoner, sur-

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rounded by guards and keepers, exercises over all who came near him;" the French, he declared, trembled at his aspect, the English approached him with awe, and no one dared "to treat him as an equal." Such was the divinity that hedged this parvenu king! Looking at this power of personal fascination from another side, we may recall Josephine's remark that when he chose Napoleon could be the most seductive of men. He was certainly not what we should describe as a ladies' man; and yet, though there was much about him to repel women, even in his relations with them he carried everything before him. He himself was well aware of this almost irresistible force of personality, and throughout his career he used it systematically, as circumstances might demand, to terrorise, to subdue, or to attract.

Of his outstanding intellectual characteristics—the immense range of his faculties, the variety of his interests, his fertility, penetration, depth and breadth of view, and astonishing grasp of details—it is scarcely necessary to speak. These have more than once been noted in the course of our story. But stress must be laid upon his rare power of concentration, the no less remarkable rapidity with which he could pass from one subject to another, and his prodigious capacity for work. His marvellous brain was under the control of an equally marvellous will. His mental habits were suggestive

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of the regularity and precision of a fine machine. As he himself said at St. Helena: "Different subjects and different affairs are arranged in my head as in a cupboard. When I want to interrupt one subject, I shut that drawer and pull out another." There was no exaggeration in the statement. Taine quotes testimony to the same effect from some unpublished notes of Count Chaptal: "I have never seen him distracted in one business by another, or leaving that which he was discussing to think of that which he had been discussing or which he would have to attend to presently." And he gives an illustration: "The news, favourable or unfavourable, from Egypt, never took his attention away from the Civil Code, nor the Civil Code from the combinations which were necessary for the welfare of Egypt. . . . Never was there a man who gave himself more entirely to what he was doing, or distributed his time better over the things which he had to do." Even bodily fatigue had no effect upon the vigour and flexibility of his mind. Sleep itself had been made a slave, and came and went at the word of command. "Do I wish to sleep?" he said. "I close all the drawers, and there I am—asleep." He could thus take a few hours' rest—and a few hours generally sufficed—when and where he chose. While the battle of Wagram was raging he lay down on a rug and refreshed himself with a twenty minutes' nap.

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As for his passion and his powers of work, they were almost incredible; if any other man has ever equalled him in this respect, I do not remember that his case has been recorded in history. "I am always at work," he said; "at dinner—at the theatre. I wake up at night to work." He could work steadily and intensely for twelve, fourteen, eighteen hours at the stretch, and at the end his mind seemed as alert as ever. In the spring of 1803 he worked uninterruptedly for three days and three nights. He wore out every one who had anything to do with him—his generals, his advisers, his secretaries. At St. Cloud he often kept his council in session all night long, and until its members were dozing round him, overcome with fatigue. His two secretaries were continually busy, and he dictated so fast that he was a terror to them. Bourrienne, Meneval, Maret, when they acted as his amanuenses, had in self-defence to invent a kind of shorthand.

His memory was not the least wonderful of his intellectual gifts. Like most marvellous memories it had its weak spots—it was poor, Bourrienne tells us, for proper names, dates, and words. But for facts, localities, statistics, it was astonishing. He seemed to have every detail of every subject at his finger tips, and available for immediate use. This was naturally most apparent in military matters,

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which were always his chief concern; everything, no matter how trivial, relating to his army, its equipment, positions, movements, officers, men, appeared always to be uppermost in his mind. But his complete intimacy with other subjects was scarcely less remarkable. He often surprised the heads of departments with his accurate knowledge of the smallest particulars of the business under their special charge. One of his General Directors of Posts once declared that "it has frequently happened to me not to be as certain as he was regarding distances and a multitude of details of my administration."

Of course Napoleon's magnificent brain was supported by a magnificent constitution, which for many years of tremendous and incessant activity seemed equal to all the demands which were made upon it, and only gave out in the end, as we have seen, when the strain became too great for any human constitution to bear. His capacity for mental work, like his iron endurance on the field of battle—he once fought for five days without taking off his boots or closing his eyes—depended upon his physique. Any ordinary man's digestion would have been ruined by his hurried meals and supreme indifference to the elementary principles of hygiene. But upon him such things seemed to have no appreciable effect. Even at Elba, when lassi-

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tude had already set in, he astonished Sir Neil Campbell by his activity; more than once, Sir Neil reports, he had seen those who accompanied the Emperor literally tired out by him. On one occasion, after spending eight hours on his feet, inspecting frigates and transports, he took a three hours' ride on horseback in order, as he said, to rest himself!

Yet despite his superb constitution and his habitual self-command, Napoleon was a man of nerves as well as a man of nerve, and sometimes his nerves were too much for him. "I have very irritable nerves," he once said; and added that but for the singular slowness of his circulation (which was much below the normal) he might, with his highly-wrought temperament, have been in danger of going mad. At times he broke down completely and found relief in an outburst of tears. His behaviour when he parted from Josephine can only be described as hysterical. In the most critical moment of 18 Brumaire he lost his head entirely and by his half-crazy behaviour almost ruined his cause. On the flight to Elba he—the man who from youth had been familiar with danger and death—was seized with spasms of fear.

His passions, too, again and again broke through control, and led him to actions grotesquely wanting in decorum and decency. In him the habits of

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civilisation were only on the surface; the untamed ferocity of the Corsican was just beneath the skin. He was capable of fearful explosions of wrath, when his pent up anger would find vent in volleys of oaths and even in physical violence. Surprised by Josephine in one of his intrigues, he smashed the furniture of the room in his rage. On one occasion he kicked Volney in the stomach. On another, he seized Berthier by the throat and thrust him against the wall. On another again, he knocked down his minister of justice and pummelled him with his fists.

The baffling complexity of Napoleon's character is already apparent. Still more apparent does it become when we look at him a little more closely from the moral side.

Was he a good man? The smile which irresistibly arises when that simple question is put is, as Lord Roseberry says, itself significant. Still more significant perhaps is the fact that such a question, which we surely have a right to press home in regard to any man, be he small or great, is so rarely even suggested in respect of him. The commonly accepted opinion, which has too long been allowed to pass without protest, is, that such a Titan among the pigmies stands altogether beyond the reach of the standards by which the pigmies are to be judged. This indeed was, in effect, Napoleon's own view of

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himself. He regarded himself—at any rate he came in the later stages of his life to regard himself—as a kind of demi-god, or in modern language, a Superman, for whom, as I put it in the first pages of this story, the ordinary moral obligations of humanity did not exist and who was a law unto himself. Thus while he insisted strongly upon the need of honesty, rectitude, and purity for the masses, he always thought and acted as an individual unique and apart. Conscience, so far as he recognised it at all, was for him, as the phrase runs, a confederate rather than a judge. There is no evidence anywhere in his career that he felt its power to guide or check. Theoretically and practically he was entirely antinomian.

That he had his good natural qualities must of course be conceded. Far too much indeed is made by some of his ardent admirers of his so-called "bourgeois" virtues; especially by M. Arthur Lévy, who in his elaborate piece of special pleading, *Napoléon Intime,* grows quite sentimental over them. But as we have seen, his family affections were very strong. He was certainly a good son and a devoted father; and except and until political misunderstandings arose between them, he was generous to his brothers and sisters. Whether or not he is to be described as an ideal husband, I will leave it to M. Lévy and other apologists to determine.

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He showed himself grateful, too, as I have pointed out, to those who in early life helped and encouraged him, and until despotic power had finally spoilt and dehumanised him, he was an affectionate friend. Upon one conspicuous blot on his private character —his licentiousness and, as he himself admitted, his oriental views of women—it is unnecessary to dwell. On the whole, if his private relationships alone be considered, there are, when all deductions have been made, many things about the man, particularly about the man in his earlier years, which are pleasant enough to contemplate.

Outside such private relationships, however, the case is very different. Here we are most impressed by his utter callousness. Among the feelings to which, as demi-god, he rose superior, were those of common humanity. Except when his ambitions were involved, says Bourrienne, he was not inaccessible to pity. We are glad to know it, because when such ambitions came into play—and after all, most of his life was compounded of them—all sense of pity disappeared. He was not indeed cruel by nature; he did not practice cruelty for its own sake, or enjoy it; but he was capable of any cruelty which he deemed essential to his purposes. "As a statesman," Metternich declares, "he was not moved by feelings. He decided without bias of love or hate. He crushed or removed his en-

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emies without consulting anything but necessity or interest. That end attained, he forgot them." Mme. de Staël says much the same thing in different words:—"He regards a human creature as a fact or a thing, and not as a fellow [*un semblable*]. He does not hate any more than he loves; for him there is only himself; all the rest of the world are ciphers." He made no pretence to disinterested affection. "After all," he said to Gourgaud, "I only care for people who are useful to me, and so long as they are useful." We have already noted his absolute indifference to human life and suffering. A man like me, he told Metternich (his exact expression cannot well be repeated) cares nothing for a million men. The retreat from Moscow he deplored only as a personal catastrophe. He never felt the slightest remorse over the holocausts of victims which his grandiose schemes of conquest had required. The best manhood of France had been ruthlessly destroyed at his bidding, with results powerfully depicted in Alfred de Musset's *Confessions d'un Enfant du Siècle;* but to the end his regrets were for himself and his own ruin only.

This brings us to the central feature of his character—his overtowering, all-absorbing egotism —the egotism described by Taine as "not inert, but active and encroaching, proportioned to the activity

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and the extent of his faculties, developed by education and circumstances, exaggerated by success and autocratic power, until it became monstrous, until it reared, in the midst of human society, a gigantic *I*, which incessantly spread out its rapacious and tenacious tentacles, which was wounded by all opposition, which was disturbed by all independence, and which in the illimitable domain which it assumed as its own, could suffer no other life to exist except as an appendix or an instrument of its own." This powerful passage (very inadequately translated, as I am aware) does not seem to me a whit too strong. Self-engrossed from the first, Napoleon ended by being a megalomaniac. As with Macbeth, so with him, to his own good all causes had to give way—all causes and all people; for even when he stood upon the giddy summit of supreme greatness, he was still irritably jealous of the glory of others, and like the Turk, could bear no brother near his throne.

A firm believer in brute force, Napoleon refused to recognise any divine government of the world, and did not see that in the evolution of human affairs "cause and effect are the chancellors of God." But we, looking back, can now understand that in accordance with the principles of poetic justice, this enormous egotism, by over-reaching itself, was the ultimate factor in his undoing. In 1809, when he

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was still, in the world's eyes at any rate, on the upward sweep of his career, Wordsworth in one of his sonnets wrote of him with a poet's license of prophecy and predicted that

"If old judgments keep their sacred course
Him from that height shall Heaven precipitate."

But it was Napoleon himself who brought about the precipitation. He sought to transcend the limits of the human lot; he defied those laws of life which are older than the throne of Zeus; the wheel came full circle; and Waterloo and St. Helena were the result. It may at first seem surprising that a man of such a practical and positive temper should have been the prey of boundless imagination. But that boundless imagination was only one aspect of his egotism. From the outset he had indulged in vast and gorgeous dreams, and his immense self-confidence and almost fantastic faith in his star led him to believe that the wildest of these might be realised. For many years, as triumph followed triumph and prize after prize fell within his grasp, it appeared that his unrivalled audacity had in fact justified itself. But at length success turned his brain. His splendid judgment was clouded by hallucinations. He did things which had even the savour of insanity. To the end, though the self-confidence disappeared the old ob-

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stinacy, which had been born of it, remained as strong as ever. Then he tempted fortune once too often, and the crash came.

There is one more point that may be considered. What about Napoleon's religion? It is difficult to answer this question because, though he talked much about religion, especially at St. Helena, he talked in different ways at different times and to different people. In particular, it should be noted, for the fact is itself characteristic, the opinions which he gave out for public consumption were often hopelessly at variance with those which he expressed in confidential intercourse. A few broad features of his thought may none the less be indicated.

He had of course a profound sense of the political value of religion. This is only what we should expect in the author of the Concordat. "Religion is useful to mankind," he said. "Those who govern should employ it to influence men"—a typical bit of Macchiavellism. But even at the time of the Concordat he disclaimed any personal interest in the restored faith: "For this, some will call me a papist. I am no such thing. I am no believer in creed. I was a Mohammedan in Egypt. I am a Catholic in France." Once again we recognise the Superman's calm contempt for what he nevertheless deems excellent for the masses. Yet for the sake of policy he kept up the outward show of conform-

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ity to the church, and was solicitous lest his private views should interfere with the effectiveness of his public action. In early life, probably when in Corsica in 1790, he had written a *Parallel between Jesus Christ and Apollonius of Tyre,* under the influence, it would seem, of the article on Pythagorianism in the thirteenth volume of the *Encyclopédie.* In this he had avowed his preference for Apollonius. The essay, which he lent to Fréron, was never returned to him, and disappeared. But one day during the Consulate his brother Lucien, who had greatly admired it, spoke to him about it. "Forget it!" exclaimed Napoleon. "It would be enough to embroil me with Rome, and there would be no way out save through a public retractation. And a nice thing that would be! My Concordat would be only the work of Beelzebub!"

Thus regarding religion as a political instrument he held fast to the Roman Church. Protestantism he considered as a source of dissensions, and therefore of trouble to the government. Moreover—and here again we have the Superman—he believed it to be an advantage that in the Roman Church the majority of the people do not understand their prayers: it is better that they should not understand too much about such things! Yet, very naturally, he was hostile to the Papacy, as an illegitimate rival to civil authority.

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His remark about being a Mohammedan in Egypt must, it appears, be taken more seriously than might be supposed. He seems to have had, at one time in his life at any rate, strong leanings towards the religion of the Prophet. It appealed to his sympathies if only because, as he used to point out, it had conquered half the world in ten years, and had done so largely by the power of the sword. Such an achievement made it very attractive in his eyes. Oriental despotism in general found in him a vigorous supporter; he thought it quite right that in China the emperor should be worshipped as a god. But beyond this, there was something that he liked in the bold simplicity of the Mohammedan creed. When in Egypt he was much impressed by the arguments of the Sheiks that people who adore three gods must be pagans.

His attitude towards Christianity varied, but it was often openly antagonistic. Jesus he treated as a mere fanatic, who set up for the Messiah, and met a fanatic's well-deserved fate. In regard to man he was entirely materialist, and repudiated the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. Nor had he, as I have said, any faith in the providential ordering of the world. These at least are the conclusions stated by him in familiar conversations and in terms which seem precise enough to be accepted as final. It may be, however, as Lord Rosebery sur-

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mises, that Napoleon at the bottom of his heart was more deeply impressed by the mystery of things and by the solution of that mystery which religion offers to faith, than such conversational utterances would lead us to infer. Certain it is that in his years of exile religion was continually in his mind. Certain it is too that he never wholly escaped from the associations of the Catholicism in which he had been bred. He was, we are told, always moved by the sound of church bells. Superstitious rather than devout, he involuntarily crossed himself at every moment of crisis or special peril. It was by his own directions, as we have seen, that the rites of extreme unction were administered at the end.

Of his deeply-rooted fatalism I have more than once spoken. I return to it here because it was one part of his egotism, of his indomitable faith in himself as the man of destiny. He was fond of saying that the bullet which was to kill him had not yet been moulded. "I feel myself impelled towards a goal with which I am unacquainted," he said in 1812. "When I have reached it, when I am no longer needed for it, an atom will suffice to throw me down. But until that moment all efforts will be powerless against me." And again at St. Helena: "All that is to happen is written down; our hour is marked; we cannot prolong it a minute longer than fate has predestined." Such fatalism

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was undoubtedly a considerable element in his courage, his audacity, and his success.

To this brief study of Napoleon's character we have not here to add any estimate of his work and influence in either the military or the civil field. He was unquestionably great as a soldier, as an administrator, and for a little while as a ruler; and for what he did directly or indirectly to carry forward the traditions of '89, to break up the foundations of feudal Europe, and so to prepare the way for modern democracy, I for one willingly give him my tribute of gratitude. But it is with the man Napoleon that we are now concerned, and the point to emphasise is that in the high and severe sense of the term Napoleon as a man was not great. Yet his personality and genius were precisely of a kind to impress and awe the multitude, while his sensational career will long continue to make an irresistible appeal to popular imagination. Men love the dramatic; and his biography is one of the most dramatic in history. They are always ready to prostrate themselves before strength of whatever sort, power however used, success by whatever means attained; and Napoleon offered them a spectacle of strength, power and success such as the world has seldom seen. Especially are they moved by the evil glamour of military glory; and the mighty conqueror, standing unmoved amid the millions

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slaughtered for his insane ambitions, towers magnificent in their sight. Hence the worship which has long been paid to him by so many. Hence the place which has been assigned to him among the transcendent heroes of our race. But the writer of these pages has, he hopes, made it abundantly clear that his own feeling for their subject is not admiration, but aversion, not unmingled with both pity and contempt. He has done his best to be impartial and just, but for him Napoleon remains a gigantic personality which repels rather than attracts—a colossal image with feet of clay.

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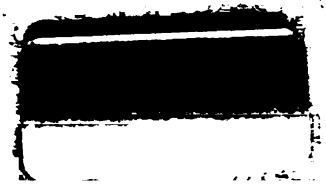

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